THE DEVELOPMENT OF STYLE IN INDIAN PAINTING

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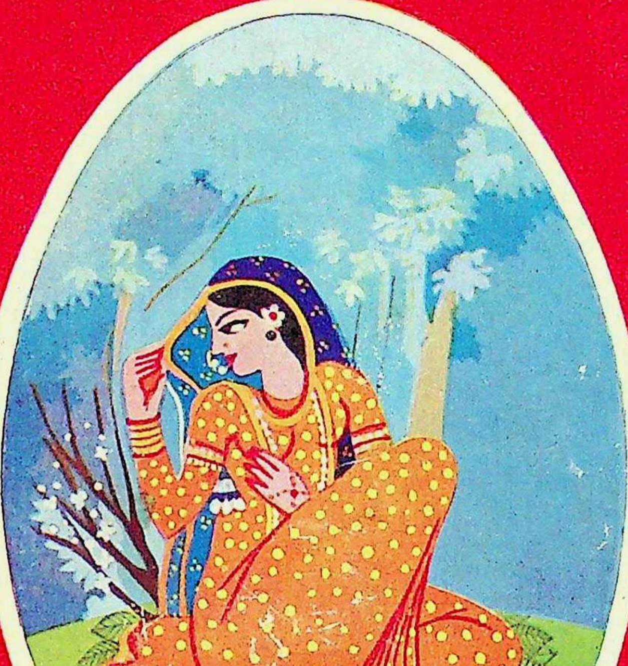

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Indian History and Culture

The Development of Style In Indian Painting

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Preface

The Development of Style in Indian Painting constitutes the tenth series of the Heras Memorial Lectures, which were delivered in 1969. The Lectures were founded in 1960 to honour the memory of the Spanish Jesuit missionary to India, Henry Heras, well-known for his contribution to Indian history and Indology. The Heras Institute is deeply grateful to Mr Karl Khandalavala and the previous lecturers, senior scholars all of them, who readily came forward to pay their tribute to the memory of Father Heras. Most of them had known Father Heras personally, and it was this readiness on their part to put themselves to inconvenience for the sake of an old friend that made it possible to arrange for these Lectures through a full decade without interruption.

The earlier series of Lectures, the publication of which has been sponsored by the Institute, are as follows: *Indian Archaeology Today*, by H. D. Sankalia (delivered 1960, published 1962); *Sources of Indian History, with special reference to South India*, by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri (d. 1961, p. 1964); *Bombay Presidency in the Mid-eighteenth Century* (d. 1962, p. 1965); *Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, by A. L. Basham (d. 1963, p. 1966); *Cultural Trends in Medieval India*, by H. K. Sherwani (d. 1965; p. 1968); *Historiography in Modern India*, by R. C. Majumdar (d. 1967; p. 1970).

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From the Earliest Times till Ajanta

THE TERM 'STYLE', so far as painting is concerned, ordinarily connotes the methods employed for the expression of pictorial forms in line and colour. But I do not think it adequate to consider 'style' merely from the point of view of technique. A more satisfactory approach is to regard it as an integrated process conditioned by the skill of the artist, his mental attitude, his emotional response, his environment, his traditional and religious background, and the interplay of political happenings, often momentous, against the canvas of history.

Nothing remains to inform us if any form of painting, apart from the decoration of pottery, existed in the still enigmatical Indus Valley civilization which flourished between 2500 B.C. and 1500 B.C. The numerous intaglio seals however are indicative of the existence of a highly skilled art of engraving, and thus, in a modified sense of the term, there were draughtsmen of quite outstanding merit in the riverine cities of Mohenjo-daro, Harrappa, Lothal and Kalibangan. We may, in fact, liken them to graphic artists who produce drypoints by engraving on metal plates. The Indus Valley seal-engravers, with their sure touch and fluency of line, had a remarkable feeling for animal forms in particular, such as the bull, the buffalo, the mythical unicorn, the deer, the elephant, the tiger and the rhinoceros. Although it was an engraver's art, yet the hand that engraved was that of a practised draughtsman, and draughtsmanship, it may be observed, is the very basis of painting. There is nothing primitive in the ' animal style ' of the Indus Valley civilization, and we may accordingly wonder if such skill was not possessed even before 2500 B.C. But at this point of time the mists of uncertainty descend on the scene, and the obstacles to deeper investigation become so formidable that the quest for the ancestors of these seal-engravers must await a solution which may never be forthcoming.

It is indeed remarkable, however, that at the very beginning of our endeavour to trace the development of style in Indian painting we should find such accomplished draughtsmanship. The seals, which were used for commercial purposes and also as amulets, unmistakably indicate the fact that there were guilds of professional seal-engravers who had perfected their art. In addition, the Indus Valley culture was possessed of another form of draughtsmanship which was of quite a different order. It is to be seen in the drawings on pottery and storage jars, which consist of geometrical and stylized floral patterns as well as forms of birds and animals. But these bird and animal forms, in their lively but crude orientation, are something far apart from the consummate ' animal style ' of the seals. Leaving aside the enigma of the seals, we may truly say that here on the painted pottery of the common man, made for everyday usage, we find the beginnings of style in Indian painting. We may ask what dictated the style of such forms of decoration? It was surely a primitive emotion, untrammelled by any technical considerations or any obsession to achieve exactitude. It was an urge similar to that which led the earliest dwellers of the rock-shelters, which we find in many parts of India, to sketch, in red ochre or black on the rocks which sheltered them, figures of hunters and the quarry which they hunted, such as the antelope, the rhinoceros and other animals, or to depict their herds and the herdsmen who led them out to pasture. In these rock-shelter drawings the art is often no more than a pictorial shorthand. A circle depicts the human head, a single line the body, two lines the legs, and two more lines the arms. There is no striving for naturalism, though these rock-shelter artists were often surprisingly successful in imparting vitality and verve to their creations.

The essence of style in its earliest forms is the primeval urge of primeval man to articulate in 'line' a moment of thrill such as the chase, a moment of joy such as the tribal dance, a moment of tranquillity when his herds come home at the hour of dusk.

It is thought that about 1500 B.C. our Aryan forefathers crossed from their original habitations into the land of the five rivers. This great migration of peoples, moving in vast hordes, probably spelt the decline of the rich trading cities of the Indus Valley civilization. Nomadic Aryan hordes, as they spread over various parts of India, exulting in their superiority in warfare and in their stalwart bodies, were no doubt contemptuous of an environment utterly foreign to them. They had roamed the wide open spaces and they did not understand an urban civilization with its accent on trade and a high degree of civic amenities in the manner of living. But even if the tragedy of the Indus civilization suffering heavily at the hands of the invading Aryans was in fact witnessed, I do not believe that the Indus Valley culture was decimated altogether. The phenomenon of conquerors absorbing in course of time the way of life of the conquered is one that is not unknown to the pages of history. In the process of making India their permanent home a change came over the Aryan nomadic settlers, and they also learnt to build cities and adopt ways of life which they once scorned. That the Indus Valley civilization must have been a dominating factor during this period of transformation seems to be likely indeed.

With the consolidation of Aryan power, at least in the north and in parts of central India, we come to what is known as the Epic Age of our civilization—the age of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Unfortunately we have no concrete evidence to enlighten us on the achievements of painters and sculptors during this period of Indian history which is thought to be about the 8th or 9th century B.C. The two great epic poems themselves were originally oral accounts, handed down from generation to generation, till they were finally reduced to writing many centuries after they were composed by inspired bards. While it is true that the epics yield us a certain amount of information pertaining to the arts, including painting, such accounts have to be accepted with more than caution. They are almost invariably exaggerated to a high degree, and in all probability are interpolations of late origin. It is not however unlikely that some form of painting existed in the Epic Age and that the walls of the residences of the Aryan chiefs were embellished with designs or even pictures. Such forms of decoration, if they existed, were doubtless the handiwork of guild craftsmen, for we have several references to guilds of artisans in early Indian literature, including the *Jātaka* tales whose origins are too remote to trace.

Just as the walls of the residences of the Aryan chiefs may have been painted, so also the wooden façades of such dwellings may have been adorned with wood carvings embellished with colour. It would appear that in early days as well as in later times, the arts of both sculpture and painting were frequently practised by one and the same guild. In the *Viṣṇudharmottara* there is a significant passage in which king Vajra says to Mārkaṇḍeya, 'O Sinless One, how should I make the forms of gods, so that the image made according to the rules may always manifest the deity.' And the sage replies, 'He who does not know the canon of painting (*citrasūtram*) can never know the canon of image making.' The reason why I say this account is significant is that there has always been an intimate relationship between sculpture and painting in Indian art. Though we have no remains of any painting of the Epic Age, we can be certain that guild rules governed all artistic production. Many of these rules are indicative of the manner in which the minds of men worked in the unsophisticated society of the Aryans, charmed and still dominated by their store of legends and by their belief in nature gods and supernatural phenomena. To this must be linked their subservience to a constant performance of ritual to propitiate the forces of both good and evil. To such factors, combined with the beautiful imagery of Vedic hymns, we have to attribute the slow growth of a series of guild precepts for the guidance of painters and sculptors alike, be it for the decoration of sacrificial altars or of residential mansions. It is essential to indicate certain broad features of these rules since they had a definite bearing on the development of style both in painting and sculpture. The proportions and stances of gods and men were conditioned by such rules. Human personages as well as divine manifestations were assigned various units of measurement not only for their total height but also for various parts of the body. And quite logically gods and goddesses were ordained to be of greater height than men and women. For an easier recognition of divine beings, they usually possessed more than two arms and held in their hands the symbolic objects intended to distinguish one deity from another. The powerful demons could also on occasion be almost god-like in appearance, probably indicating the undercurrent of respect with which they were not unjustifiably held. But they could also be terrifying in countenance like the hosts of Māra, the Evil One, assailing the Buddha just before he attained enlightenment.

Another precept of guidance required that kings should be of more impressive stature than their courtiers and attendants, and it can easily be seen that such an injunction stemmed from the concept of kingship itself in early Aryan polity where the tribal chief was both ruler and *paterfamilias*.

Dwarfs, who constantly appear in Indian art, were from their very nature always short, fat and ugly, but the surprising variety which is to be found in their rendering is a pointer to the very considerable latitude permissible in the application of every formula of æsthetics within certain broadly defined limits. Hunters and forest dwellers were equated with the aboriginal tribes and were usually represented as dark complexioned and clad in bark and leaves. Sages were always bearded. Female figures were quite understandably of lesser height than their male counterparts, and from very early times were subjected to a representational formula which emphasized the sensuous elements of womanhood, due no doubt to that most ancient of fertility cults, the worship of the Mother Goddess. Of course, the iconography of each pantheon, whether Brahmanical, Buddhist, or Jain, was a process of slow development over centuries, becoming more and more involved with the passage of time from much simpler beginnings. The division of the body into different units of measurement was doubtless based on what was thought to be a system for the depiction of ideal proportions. In actual practice, however, a strictly mathematical adherence to such measurements does not seem to have been insisted upon.

The formula method was also extended by another set of rules to convey the dominant characteristics of the figures to be painted, and applied to the flexions of the body. The upright body with the feet unbent was a posture of serenity, calm, or towering majesty. Many gods and divine beings are depicted thus, and it became one of the most favoured poses for the delineation of the austere meditating Tīrthaṅkaras of the Jain faith. The body slightly bent from the vertical axis, and one leg also slightly bent, was a stance frequently adopted for gods and kings represented as standing in a posture of ease. For the depiction of movement, the body was more pronouncedly bent away from the vertical axis and the legs were also suitably placed at angles to the body. This *tribhaṅga* stance meaning *thrice bent*, or *atibhaṅga* stance meaning a *greatly bent* position of the body, was always utilized for figures of gods and men in action. To emphasize the beauty and lure of the female figure it was usually portrayed in the *tribhaṅga* attitude. In the representation of dancing figures there was, it seems, a close adherence to the postures which an elaborate terpsichorean code of ancient lineage had prescribed.

The creators of these rules were not necessarily the guild craftsmen themselves. There is a very considerable volume of Indian literature on æsthetics, and though such writers belong to later periods of time, the beginnings of various concepts pertaining to æsthetics, and the elementary rules for achieving the canons thus laid down were probably formulated by the Vedic *caraṇas* or academies of learning. Thus 'stance' also became a means for the painter and the sculptor to convey certain attributes or actions of the divinity or personage he sought to depict. Moreover, the guilds also developed a language of gesture, again probably based on a terpsichorean code, by showing the hands and fingers in various attitudes. It is not difficult to imagine how such an approach, founded on formulas, soon developed into a diagrammatic method based on certain set proportions capable of calculation, and certain placements of the body and limbs capable of ascertainment in relation to a vertical or horizontal axis. Such formulas were not, however, entirely artificial. To a considerable extent they were based on actual observation and then systematized. Even when largely oriented by imagination, there was usually some basis in real life, even if at times slender, on which they were founded.

For instance the erect, unbent figure of the god Viṣṇu, armed with his discus, mace and conch, was probably derived from the presence of the majestic upright figure of an army commander as seen standing at the head of his warriors, whom the populace of the city looked upon as the preserver of their freedom. In the Hindu Trinity, Viṣṇu is the Preserver. In his manifestation as Tripurāntaka, the great

God Śiva who defeated the three demon sons of Tāraka has his hands so poised as to indicate that he is releasing mighty arrows from his bow to pierce the hitherto impregnable castles of his adversaries. It may also be observed that he rides a chariot in the manner of an Aryan chieftain leading his tribe into battle. The Aryan military captains were, as is well known, chariot-mounted bowmen. The primeval belief that god fashioned man in his own image, though on a lesser scale, led not unnaturally to the process of man fashioning god in the image of man.

The excessive elaboration of guild rules which we find in later periods of our history could not have existed in the Epic Age. At the same time it is not unlikely that the origin of guild rules is to be found in the epic period, or not long thereafter. So also the genesis of a well-known latter-day theory of æsthetics, called the 'six limbs of painting,' may have been conceived in the hoary past. These limbs, known as *Ṣaḍāṅga*, are supposed to govern both line and colour:

(1) *Rūpabheda* means the differentiation and proportions of FORMS.
(2) *Pramāṇa* deals with LINE and its quality, the placement of figures and objects, which I feel has been wrongly referred to as perspective, and also with the design of a composition.
(3) *Bhāva* deals with EMOTIONS to be expressed by the painter.
(4) *Lāvaṇya* is concerned with imparting GRACE or lustre, as for instance in the representation of beautiful females and dancers or even to an

entire scene where such elements are required to predominate.

(5) *Sādṛśya* implies the *simultaneous* comprehension of form (portrayal of likeness) and what it is intended to suggest.

(6) *Varṇikābhaṅga* connotes the *harmony of colours* which it is essential to achieve in any painting.

These six limbs undoubtedly indicate an insight into what should be the qualities of a good painting and influenced the formation of style. Though the theoretician's outlook played a vital role in Indian art, let us try to understand what was the popular approach, even in early times, to the content and style of a painting.

It seems to me that here we are faced with a conflict of ideas. The theoretician's approach laid down certain norms to be observed by the painter, based on what were regarded as ideal proportions, stances, and colours. For even colours had meanings assigned to them. Red could imply passion, green could indicate baser feelings though not always so, white connoted purity, yellow aroused the thought of the bright Indian sunlight, black was peculiar to the demoniac aspects of the universe, and so forth. The guild rules never seem to have stressed a realistic rendering of the human form, by which I mean there was no emphasis on what we in modern-day academic parlance would term as studies from life. The Greeks translated the perfect human form into marble and bronze, the Hindus created in sculpture and painting what they considered to be ideal forms for the interpretation of certain æsthetic and iconic concepts. Though such forms were based on the essentials of the human body, there was no adherence to anatomical exactitude nor any attempt to portray in an essentially naturalistic manner a perfect man or a perfect woman as understood by the Greeks. The guilds to a considerable extent followed the writers on æsthetic theories, though it must be conceded that the minutiae of the theorists too often becomes meaningless and of no importance from the practical viewpoint of the artist. While it is true that an alphabet for artistic expression, comprised of units of measurements and deviations from a vertical and a horizontal axis, can have its uses, it also has its limitations. The belief that the Indian artist in practice utilized every part of the human body to express various sentiments has found favour with some writers, but in practice no such thing existed because the *śilpa* texts, over-burdened with details often verging on confusion, could never act as a complete substitute for inspiration. It is nevertheless true that style in Indian painting from the period of its early development came to be systematized amongst those who practised the art professionally. Individual ideas and individual emotions were suitably regulated so that the output should conform to the manner in which a particular guild painted. In other words style came to be regulated by guild curriculum and discipline.

We have considerable literary evidence of the working of the guild system, and, as we would expect, the members of the guild worked under a foreman known as an *āvesani*. He controlled the workers in the guild, supervised the methods that should be followed and decided how the subject matter, required to be painted for his patron, should be composed and dealt with. Like the drawing master of today he must surely have made corrections, when needed, to every design produced by his artisans before it was allowed to be put into execution. It was a master and disciple relationship in which individuality was submerged, though not totally, into well accepted practices. Epigraphical evidence has made us aware that there were also royal guilds working for the king to carry out his personal requirements, as well as to accomplish the decoration of structures of which he or his high ministers of state were donors either for the public good or for the benefit of a particular religious sect which had been favoured with royal bounty.

At the Great Stūpa of Sanchi of the first century B.C. is the famous inscription, *Rāñno Siri-Sātakaṇisa āvesanisa Vāsiṭhiputrasa Ānaṁdasa dānaṁ*—gift of Ānanda, son of Vāsiṭhi, foreman of the artisans of Rājā Sātakaṇi. It indicates that at least on one of the majestic gateways of this *stūpa*, the royal guild of the Śātavāhana ruler named Śatakarṇi was working under the guidance of an *āvesani* (foreman) named Ānanda, and at the completion of the royal donation it would appear that the foreman humbly added his own gift to which the inscription pertains. On another gateway of the same *stūpa* at Sanchi we again have an interesting inscription which throws light on the guild system, its methods and flexibility. The inscription reads, *Vedisakehi daṁtakārehi rupakaṁmaṁ kataṁ*—the work of the ivory carvers of Vedisa. The guild of ivory carvers of Bhilsa, the ancient Videsā, desiring to contribute to the great *stūpa* rail undertook to carry out a portion of the carving. In fact the art of ivory carving, like that of wood-carving, was older than the art of stone carving and that is why one can sense the technique of the ivory carver and the wood-carver at Sanchi. The inscription reveals the adaptability of the guilds, who could carve in ivory or stone and probably paint as well. One of the outstanding characteristics in Indian wall painting up to the 6th century A.D. is derived, I believe, from the circumstance that painter-guilds could also carve in stone. The theories of æsthetics, by providing practical guide lines, perpetuated the guild system, while guild discipline ensured that no deviation took place from accepted standards of production except within a permissible ambit. Guilds may have differed somewhat from each other in the methods followed by them, and also to some extent in their approach to the theories of æsthetics, some being more rigid than others. But within each guild there was no scope for any radical display of individuality. That is the reason why, in considering the development of style in Indian painting, we are not considering its development at the hands of individual artists but only the development of style as it took place amongst guilds over a period of time. The real reason for the anonymity of the Indian artist is not the popularly accepted one of effacement by the artist of himself in pursuit of a spiritual experience or a deeply devout mission. This anonymity is just the natural consequence of a rigid guild system in which individuality, outside the discipline of the guild, had no place. Within that discipline the artist could effect variations. The totality of work however always remained the work of the guild—the work of a *corporate* body. Thus it is that, for the most part, when viewing any particular achievement of Indian painting, we note a unity in the style throughout. At times we may sense the brush of the master artist, and in other passages discern the hand of a pupil. But there is never any violent departure from the accepted style of the project. It has a remarkable unity of execution in each phase of its progress or decline as the case may be.

Though the guilds were guided by a code of interpretation, the common man always appears to have felt that the highest achievement of art meant the closest possible imitation of nature, objects and persons—a deceptive exactitude between a painting and the subject matter thereof. In the Tocharian *Puṇyavanta Jātaka* is a tale which admirably illustrates the point of view of the ordinary citizen who could not comprehend the theories of æsthetics. A foreign painter once came to the house of a highly skilled artisan. The latter offered the painter every hospitality and at night placed a mechanical girl for him in his bedroom. The painter became enamoured of her thinking she was a real girl and caught her hand, whereupon the mechanism fell apart. Alas said the painter 'I have been ridiculed by rags and strings and pegs.' Thereupon taking out his colours and brushes he painted himself on the wall as though hanging dead, with the rope round his neck attached to a hook. He then hid himself behind a door. In the morning the artisan came to attend to the needs of the painter and found the mechanical doll fallen apart and the painter hanging dead from a rope.

The artisan was greatly distressed that his practical joke had resulted in so dire a tragedy. A crowd collected at the artisan's house and felt sad to see what had happened. The artisan reported the matter to the king who sent his ministers along to the scene of the tragedy, and they, with other citizens gathered there, wept when they saw the painter hanging dead from a rope.

The artisan was then about to cut down the body for burial by severing the rope with an axe when the painter came out of hiding and disclosed himself saying, 'That is a painting and I am the painter.' The people were amazed at the skill of the painter and they also laughed with joy.

The nature of painting a little after the epic period can also be gathered from certain literary accounts such as the Pāli *Mahā-Ummagga Jātaka* which informs us that a great hall was painted with many scenes, including Indra's court with dancers and musicians. There were also landscapes of small and large lakes and ponds with blooming lotuses, water birds and aquatic animals. The Himālayas were also depicted with mount Kailāsa and the Mānasasarovara lake. So also the deities of the Four Quarters of the earth and their attendants appeared in painted scenes. If such descriptions can be relied on, then we may say that early Indian painting had, in addition to the depiction of gods and men, also developed a limited landscape style which may well represent the ancestry of lotus lakes and aquatic creatures as seen at Sittanavasal, Pudukottai State, in the 8th or early 9th century A.D., and also at Ajanta.

But let us now leave the realm of conjectures and literary references and, having established the background against which style in Indian painting has to be judged, proceed to assess what was actually achieved in the earliest wall paintings known to us, namely those of Caves 9 and 10 at the Buddhist monastery of Ajanta, as well as in the later paintings of Caves 16, 17, 1 and 2 at the same site at the end of the 5th and in the first half of the 6th century A.D. Caves 9 and 10 belong to the 1st century B.C. In their pristine state, the paintings in these early Caves consisted of long horizontal panels decorating the interior walls. It is sad to see their condition today. One is instantly struck by the fact that here we have a well-developed art. It is not embryonic as it is sometimes mistakenly thought to be. In other words, it is a continuation, adapted to the needs of the Buddhist faith, of that style of painting which adorned the palaces and halls of kings who ruled when the Buddha and Mahāvīra, the prophets of Buddhism and Jainism, were wandering in ancient Magadha, preaching their doctrines, in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.

The Śaiśunāgas and their successors the Nandas were two powerful dynasties that held sway in northern and eastern India from the 6th to the late 4th century B.C. It was a period of intense intellectual activity, and in numerous crafts the guild system had become well established. The earliest literary references to painting may well be allusions to this period. In fact, the very idea of decorating the walls of the *caitya* cathedral caves of the Buddhists and later on their dwellings, known as *vihāras*, must have been borrowed from the painted walls of palaces and halls. When this style of painting, no doubt more matured by the time it was employed in caves 9 and 10 at Ajanta, was pressed into service for the adornment of Buddhist monasteries, the subject matter was naturally chosen to glorify and propagate the Buddhist faith. At the same time the wall paintings of the Buddhist cave monasteries at Ajanta, ranging from the 1st century B.C. to the 6th century A.D., themselves proclaim that they are the work of guild craftsmen who were equally at home in painting palaces or the Brahmanical deities or the tales pertaining to the life of the Buddha and his many previous incarnations. While it may be true that some guilds had more commissions for secular decorations, and others for hieratic purposes, all these guilds were alike in their skills in handling whatever subject matter was allotted to them. The painting at Ajanta in all periods is the outcome of the artistry of professional, well-trained guild-painters.

If ever there was a theory in need of refutation it is that of the monk-painters of Ajanta. This theory has unfortunately been persisted in, though the internal evidence of the paintings themselves belies it. It possesses an attractive veneer and is satisfying to those who seem more concerned with imaginative thinking than an unbiassed analysis of what the paintings themselves reveal. It is also opposed to the considerable body of literary and inscriptional evidence which we possess, and which all points one way. I have no doubt whatever that the belief that the paintings of Ajanta were the creation of devout monks is a total myth. That the guild craftsmen were guided by monk-supervisors as to the subject matter of the paintings and the broad requirements of the monastery does not admit of doubt, and there is always the possibility that a monk who had some experience in the art also lent an occasional helping hand. But by and large, the Ajanta paintings are the work of hereditary guild painters who had a long tradition of practised draughtsmanship and skilful brushwork behind them, inherited by generation after generation. In truth, one is forcibly struck by the fact that the early paintings in Caves 9 and 10, both in treatment and in composition, immediately invite comparison with the stone carving at Sanchi of the same period. There are passages such as the *Chaddanta Jātaka* in Cave 10 where one feels that the sculptors of Sanchi laid down their hammers and chisels and took up brushes and colour palettes to create the same scene in another medium. Both Sanchi and early Ajanta belong to the period of artistic activity under the Śātavāhana kings who ruled in Maharashtra and Andhradesha. Both are the outcome of a common art tradition.

In the well-known scene in Cave 10 of a Rājā and his retinue going in procession to worship at a *stūpa*, there is a sculptural quality both in the faces and the figures of the various personages depicted. It is however interesting to note that many of the faces have individual characteristics, and that the well-known stylized facial types of later work at Ajanta are absent. The formula of emphasizing the principal figures by making them taller than those accompanying them is hardly resorted to, and instead another device of style is adopted: namely, of surrounding the principal personage with a circle or semi-circle of attendant figures.

Thus, in the *Chaddanta Jātaka* the king, who reluctantly orders the noble six-tusked elephant to be slain to fulfil the vicious desires of his queen, sits with attendants and hunters around him; while close by, his queen who had the foul deed perpetrated is surrounded by her handmaidens. The compositional effect is indeed telling, each group acting as a foil to the other and yet knit together to maintain continuity of narrative. Though it is a narrative style like that of the stone carvings of Sanchi, it is without the limitations of the latter, for the painter at Ajanta had large undisturbed areas of wall space to give the composition a sweep and grandeur which could not be achieved in the small panels of upright pillars or horizontal stone cross bars. The style is not dynamic and the tempo is even, but not without movement. The great elephant herd in the *Chaddanta Jātaka*, slowly tramping through the forest with their ponderous bodies, is admirably depicted, indicating a close observation of forest life.

It is a matter of significance in the assessment of style to oberve the contrasting approach of these guild masters to the depiction of human form on the one hand, and of animal form on the other. The formula method, which in a greater or lesser degree is adhered to in the portrayal of men and women, is absent when the painters of Ajanta turn to the representation of animals and birds. It is as though a fascination for birds and beasts so ensnared them that the bonds of guild precepts were loosened, and the artist exulted in translating in line and colour his spontaneous reactions to animal and bird forms at rest or in movement.

The palette in these early paintings is subdued, or at least it appears so to us today. Earthy colours predominate, with strongly marked accents of black for the hair. This latter device is a constant feature of painting at Ajanta. Both the earlier and the later paintings at Ajanta evidence a narrative style in which the painter not only creates beautiful forms but tells a story which is often composed of several incidents. The delightful Buddhist *Jātaka* tales and the legends pertaining to the life of the Master afforded the opportunity for the fullest development of this style which had a predominantly functional purpose. It sought to expound through beauty of line, colour, and composition, the didactic tales and incidents dear to the hearts of all Buddhists who visited these Caves. In this it had a religious propensity, but at the same time a secular bias is always evident. The guild artists were not recluses like the monks who inhabited the monasteries, and they availed themselves freely of every opportunity to portray the life of their times in their accustomed manner. The Bodhisattva is a benign prince, his consort a princess. Palace maidens, dancers and musicians, a not unfamiliar sight to the artists, now fill their roles in the train of attendant followers who wait on kings who often are none other than the incarnated Buddha of the *Jātaka* stories. Soldiers, hunters, Brahmins, parasolled processionists, jesters, beggars, horsemen, elephant riders, bathing and toilet scenes, architecture and city gateways, are all derived from the contemporary scene. Into this world of reality the artists also introduced well-known ancient motifs, many of Western Asiatic origin, which no doubt

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found their way to this country due to the influx of foreign craftsmen from quite early times.

Thus we also find a world of fantasy in which we see men and women with birds' wings and feet (the *kinnaras* of ancient literature), fish-tailed animals, legendary birds, and such like creations of the mind. We also observe, particularly in the decoration of the ceilings of the caves, the love of a naturalist for flowers, creepers, lotuses, sprays and other floral forms, at times intermingled with animals such as superbly drawn elephants—a consciousness of the beauty of nature not reserved for kings and nobility, but the heritage of even the lowliest. In the midst of this panorama of life, myths, and the beauty of nature, the benevolent Bodhisattvas are seen fulfilling their roles in a *Jātaka* story, while the Buddha himself appears not only in the incidents pertaining to his life but also as an object of worship. The very content of Buddhism was bound to evoke feelings of reverence in the painters though they themselves may well have belonged to another faith. And thus they endowed with serenity and a compassionate mien not only the prince of Kapilavastu who became the Buddha, but also the Bodhisattvas who are his emanations. This reverential attitude accounts for the atmosphere which the paintings imparted to these sanctuaries as houses of worship.

This atmosphere is heightened by the situation of Ajanta and the dark quiet interior of the caves. But the painting of Ajanta is not predominantly a religious art. It is essentially an eclectic style of incomparable beauty at its best. It served the purpose of the Buddhist faith; it was a vast social document; it unfolded many beautiful things in nature; it soared into the regions of heavenly beings like flying Apsarās and Gandharvas; it had communion with a world peopled by strange creatures which have haunted the imagination of man from prehistoric times. Over a period of about six centuries the development of style in Indian painting is the story of Ajanta.

We may pause here to observe that it is indeed remarkable that the Indian artist never developed a feeling for pure landscape. In the depiction of the *Jātaka* tales we have glimpses of mountains and forests, but this is achieved only by suggestion. A rock-like formation indicates a mountain; a few trees represent a forest or a grove. On the other hand, architectural settings are constantly seen, though not in correct perspective nor even approximately to scale. Architecture is used principally as an indication of locale. Thus, a procession is seen passing through a city gateway which may be completely faulty in regard to its situation, its alignment and drawing. But that seems to matter not. It serves its purpose in the telling of a story which covers many parts of the wall. Such a method perpetuates the devices used by the stone carver at Sanchi and Amravati to compress a number of incidents into a given format. Though the painters of Ajanta had ample space on the walls, certain practices of earlier times died hard and were not considered incongruous in a narrative art, where the story at times had to be told more by a technique of compression than factual representation. It is of more than ordinary interest to note that the *Viṣṇudharmottara* lays emphasis on the technique of suggestion as a means available to the painter for expressing various ideas and situations.

The early paintings of Caves 9 and 10 belong to the Hīnayāna school of Buddhism or the Lesser Vehicle. The Buddha himself is never depicted in this period of time in anthropomorphic form but only by symbols. Because of the absence of the figure of the Buddha in these early paintings, their direct connection with a religious purpose does not become apparent save to those who know the themes they depict. The point is of importance in so far as it emphasizes that there was not a Buddhist style of painting as such. It was the style of the period. Judged as pure painting, it reveals a marked competence in simplified portraiture, and it seems that many of the types that appear on the walls were indeed memory portraits. Certain aspects of the face are however evolved into norms such as the pouting lower lip, the almond shaped eye, the pencilled eye-brows. Nevertheless, many faces retain an individuality which leads to the conclusion that these early artists had already acquired skill in portrait painting, and were accustomed, when the occasion arose, to produce reasonably good likenesses. This is what we would expect, because we know from literary sources that one of the uses of the art of painting even in early times was to produce portrait studies, whereby matrimonial alliances could be arranged between princes and princesses who had never seen each other but whose families sought an alliance through matrimonial ties. Such a usage itself implies that some degree of accomplishment in portraiture was necessary, and these early paintings of Caves 9 and 10 proclaim its existence. But I often wonder what the painter did when the princess was woefully plain! It is difficult to conceive of a more unenviable situation for a court artist. If he beautified her, he would perpetrate a fraud on an unfortunate prince; if he was truthful and painted the princess as she was in real life, then he would incur the serious displeasure of his royal patron and the inevitable consequences. Perhaps the problem was not so insoluble as it seems. With the growth of stylization under the guild precepts, it is not unlikely that portraiture for such purposes was not regarded as a strictly *representational* art and in consequence each party to a matrimonial alliance where an exchange of portraits had taken place may not have been unprepared for surprises, sometimes pleasant, sometimes otherwise. Perhaps this exchange of portraits was not intended to be taken as seriously as the gloss of literary works would have us believe. Arranged marriages after all were a normal procedure in India, and if the exigencies of a political situation so demanded, then even a handsome prince may not have been at all averse to a plain princess. Forgive me if I appear facetious, but in affairs of state who can doubt that political bliss is more important than matrimonial bliss?

The early paintings at Ajanta, while they do adhere toseveral of the rules which had been evolved for the guidance of guild artists, evidence a greater freedom from formulas than the later paintings. This indicates that stylization was an element of slow growth. But two features are present at Ajanta, both in the work of the early period as well as that of the later periods. They are firstly a remarkable fluidity and sweep of line, and secondly an equally remarkable feeling for plasticity. In fact one constantly hears of the 'line' at Ajanta, but few seem to realize the importance of this dominant characteristic of plasticity which transforms the smooth wall surface into varying planes where men, women, animals, rocks, trees, appear to emerge seemingly in three dimensional form from flat washes of colour. And yet it is not the law of perspective, as we understand the term today, which governs this plasticity.

After the decoration of Caves 9 and 10 in the 1st century B.C., we have no clear idea of painting at Ajanta till once more, in the late 5th century A.D., that is more than 500 years later, we find great activity at this monastery and significant strides in stylistic development. But what do we know of the interregnum of 500 years? That painting must have been practised need not be doubted, because the work at Ajanta in the late 5th century A.D. is so accomplished that it has to be regarded as the result of development in style during the intervening period. Of sculptural development to bridge this gap we have evidence and, side by side, painting must have progressed on similar lines. This work however has perished because it was done on impermanent surfaces such as wood and plastered walls of brick, the materials commonly used for all civic architecture.

This new spirit of activity at Ajanta was the result of benefactions of a minister of the Vākāṭaka king Hariṣeṇa of the Vatsagulma or Basim branch of the dynasty, who ruled from *c.* A.D. 475 to 500 or

510, and also of his feudatories. The reignal periods of the Vākāṭaka kings of both branches are debatable. The Vākāṭakas were a powerful Hindu dynasty who ruled over the Central Deccan during this period. But like many other Hindu dynasties they had no religious prejudices, and seem to have been patrons of the Buddhist monastic establishments in their kingdom. In the 4th century A.D. an event of prime importance had taken place, not only from a political point of view but also in so far as it was destined to affect the course of style in painting. The princess Prabhāvatī Guptā, daughter of the great Emperor Candragupta II whose paramountcy extended over many parts of the country, was married to the Vākāṭaka prince Rudrasena II. The art of the Gupta period, as is well known, has been called the golden age of India's artistic achievements, and the æsthetic standards of the Gupta period remained the ideal to be followed even long after the Gupta dynasty had vanished into oblivion. Gupta art was not confined to the domains under immediate Gupta rule. Due to the position of the Guptas as an imperial dynasty in the hey-day of their glory, the art and culture of the Gupta period spread far and wide. How marked has been the influence of Gupta art in every part of India, including the Deccan, during the period A.D. 350 to 600 is often not adequately appreciated. With the long-lived Prabhāvatī Guptā as regent at the Vākāṭaka court, after the death of her husband, there can be little doubt that Gupta art had a direct influence on the style of painting and sculpture in the Vākāṭaka kingdom. This becomes quite evident at Ajanta where most of the remains of this period are to be seen.

Some writers maintain that there is no Gupta influence in the late 5th and 6th century Vākāṭaka paintings of Ajanta, such as are seen in Caves Nos. 16, 17, 1 and 2. According to them, the Vākāṭaka style developed from that of the 2nd and 3rd century Śātavāhana and Ikṣvāku art of Amravati and Nagarjunakonda, untouched by any Gupta influence. While the first part of the proposition is correct, the second part which ignores the Gupta influence, so plain to see, is not an acceptable point of view. It cannot be supported by the contention that though there may have been Gupta influence at the Vākāṭaka court, where Prabhāvatī Guptā was queen-regent, it must have been confined to the territories of the main branch of the family, and did not extend to the regions under the rule of the Vatsagulma branch of the Vākāṭakas to which Hariṣeṇa belonged. But influences in art and literature are not confined by political boundaries. If that were so, then the influence of Kālidāsa, the famous poet and dramatist of the Gupta period, would not have penetrated every part of India already in the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries A.D.

The monasteries at Ajanta in the Vākāṭaka period were under the control of the Mahāyāna Buddhist Order, known as the Greater Vehicle. The Buddha was no more represented by a symbol. He had become a deified being and a considerable Buddhist pantheon had been evolved. In the adornment of their monastic establishments, the Mahāyāna Order gave the fullest importance to their beliefs by the constant introduction of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas into every project where sculpture and painting was linked to architectural activity. The *Jātaka* stories remained the favourite source material, but in the incidents from the life of the Buddha we now see the Master himself. In addition, the walls were covered with many Buddhas as deified beings for purposes of worship, and the great Bodhisattvas such as Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi in regal attire, with devout compassionate countenances, waited silently on the Great Being who had trodden the path of emancipation and founded the tenets of the faith for the good of mankind. The painter-guilds who were employed at Ajanta during this period were the product of two great streams of art: the Śātavāhana and Ikṣvāku art of Amravati and Nagarjunakonda of the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. in Andhradesha, and the Gupta art of Northern India which had permeated the entire country wherever cultural activities were esteemed. It was the age of the great poet Kālidāsa, whose verses even in his own day were often a source of inspiration to the sculptor and the painter. Painting at Ajanta in the Vākāṭaka period varies greatly from that of the 1st century B.C. In the interval of five centuries, guild formulas had become crystallized and a more elaborate form of stylization had set in. Tonal effects had been studied to achieve greater brilliance; and the palette, though still limited to a few colours, had evolved a considerable variation in tones. Moreover the lapis lazuli brought from Afghanistan, and now introduced for the first time, was employed with pronounced effect for joyous accents of blue sparingly distributed, for the colour was both rare and costly. Draughtsmanship also reached its peak of achievement. It is in this period that we find that wealth of decoration on the ceilings to which I have already referred. It is a scintillating display of skilled brushwork and unwavering line, but it is no mere *tour de force*. There is passionate delight to be seen in every contour as one gazes at these ceilings, and the beholder forgets he is in a house of worship. He is transported into a world of loveliness so reminiscent of the poet Keats who equated beauty with truth.

We often hear of the ‘spiritual quality’ of Ajanta painting. Nothing causes me more impatience than this trite expression. The guild artists were not concerned with spirituality. Their concern was their craftsmanship and the accomplishment of their task to the highest standards of achievement: *Pramāṇa* (the beauty of line), *Bhāva* (the beauty of emotions), *Lāvaṇya* (the beauty of grace), and *Varṇikābhaṅga* (the beauty of colour). Yet, there are many moments at Ajanta when one could kneel and pray. What, however, has been mistaken for a ‘spiritual quality’ is in truth something quite different. It is the homage of great artists to a great religious teacher whose only concern was mankind. It is the quality of reverence and not a ‘spiritual quality’. At the same time there were no obsessions at Ajanta. The painters were not dedicated co-religionists of the monks. Had they been commissioned to paint a palace with sensuous subjects, they would have approached their task with the same skill which they bestowed on Ajanta. The guilds were quite unconcerned with religion as such in relation to the art they practised. It is the same quality of painting that we see in the

Brahmanical Vaiṣṇava cave at Badami painted about A.D. 578, or in the Jain cave at Sittanavasal of the 8th or early 9th century A.D. This is surely significant. There was no spirit of dedication to any particular creed. The artists *were* dedicated, but only to their art.

In the Vākāṭaka period of Ajanta, we find many innovations in the stylistic content of the murals. The work more closely observes the formulas evolved by writers on æsthetics. For instance, in the scene where the Buddha returns to his home and is met by his wife and child, the Master is shown as a towering figure against the dwarfed height of Yaśodā and young Rāhula. The formula of emphasis through height has obviously been employed to indicate how greatly above ordinary mortals the Buddha had risen after his emancipation under the Bo-Tree at Gaya. The scenes have also become more complicated, and the handling of numerous figures in all sections of the picture space with unexcelled mastery betokens vast strides having been made in the study of compositional effects. The old method of emphasizing a principal figure by surrounding it with attendants still remains in vogue, but the purely horizontal rows of the early paintings have now given way to horizontal and vertical extensions. Male and female figures conform to certain standards of beauty and are not individualistic. Attitudes and postures as well as the placement of figures have all become matters of specialized study. Without a curriculum to acquire training in these aspects of a composition it would never have been possible for the painters to achieve such effective and novel groupings as we constantly see on the walls of Cave 1 in particular. There were also striking advances made in other aspects of technical skill. Long sweeping brush strokes now attained that dexterity which has made the Ajanta murals world famous for the quality of their ' line '.

Equally dexterous shorter brush strokes were employed in combination with varying shades of one and the same colour to achieve the moulding of faces and bodies. There is no obvious modelling as such. There is no deliberate shading, as we understand the term in an art school. Shades of colour lighten and darken almost imperceptibly, creating roundness of surfaces and undulations of the body. The highlighting of the nose, the eyelids, lips and chin, is so skilfully done that one never stops to think if it is anatomically correct or not. Almost imperceptibly a new dimension came into being at Ajanta.

While undoubtedly there is stylization at Ajanta it never has that obviousness about it, which becomes so glaring when we come to the theme of the second lecture. Though the principles of female beauty as understood in the guild canon are much to the fore, these women of Ajanta, in their semi-nakedness are fascinatingly beautiful, womanly or girlish as the occasion requires, alluring or demure, sensuous at times, but singularly free from any erotic suggestion. It is beauty that was ever uppermost in the minds of the painters, for it is an emotional style rather than an intellectual one. The full rounded breasts, the narrowing torso, the broad hips and the ample thighs tapering into slender legs in the earlier Śātavāhana manner are almost a copybook interpretation of the ideology of poets and dramatists in the Gupta Age. But it is precisely here that we are face to face with a significant truth, namely that guild discipline was not intended to suppress genius into the mediocrity of mere technical perfection. It is plain at Ajanta that the artist is the master of the rules, and that the rules are not the master of the artist. This circumstance differentiates the best work at this site from the later deterioration which set in, where numerous Buddhas are mechanically placed in rows, oft competently painted but lifeless. The spark of genius had gone.

Style in Indian painting is not something absolute. It is a discipline for the gifted painter, but a despot over those whose hands may possess cunning but whose emotions stand still. The women of Ajanta, with their languorous grace, conjure up a world of beauty, ease, leisure, elegance and refinement. In this sense the style has a distinctly aristocratic bias not to be wondered at, as the painters were in all probability members of royal guilds whose services were available to the benefactors of Ajanta, namely the ministers and feudatories of the Vākāṭaka kings. But into such scenes are woven human elements and touches of humour.

The Vākāṭaka style at Ajanta is justly famous for the charactersitic countenances of both men and women, particularly of the latter. It has given rise to the phrase ‘ an Ajantaesque face ’. Here again we are concerned with types evolved out of guild formulas and not with individualistic faces as such. In fact the Gupta ideals of female beauty, both of form and countenance, are much to the fore. The faces are characterized by arched eyebrows, long almond-shaped eyes with broad curving upper eyelids, full sensuous lips like a double curved bow, long straight noses, and small somewhat pointed chins. The structure of the face usually tends to be broad and suppresses almost always any suggestion of high cheek bones. Attention is focussed on the face by the simple stylistic device of setting it against a mass of black curling hair in the typical Gupta manner. A slight change here and there in the direction of the faces produces a variety of expressions, and thus one is never oppressed by a feeling of sameness. The body is highlighted by a profusion of gleaming white pearl jewellery, another stylistic device used to great effect. Thus we can truly say that while adhering to a framework of formulas and rules, these painters created a ‘ new look ’ of which they were the originators—the style of Ajanta. This is the style that is found at the Gupta site of Bagh, and which is followed at Badami and Sittanavasal, and carried even to far-off lands beyond the frontiers of India. But that is another story for another day.

One of the drawbacks of a guild system is that it is apt to become mechanical, even at times wearisome, and fall easily into meaningless clichés if the domination of rules becomes so complete that skill is divorced from vision. It happened even at Ajanta, where the first seeds of decline were sown as the life of the sanctuary began to ebb. The moment of supreme greatness had crossed its zenith and it was never to return in the long history of Indian painting.

There has been some controversy over the dates of the paintings in Caves 16 and 17 which form one stylistic group, and those in Caves 1 and 2 which are to be regarded as a separate stylistic group. The latter were once ascribed to a period as late as the 7th century A.D. but that viewpoint is no longer acceptable. I need not deal with the controversy at length but I will indicate my own feeling, having regard to the importance of Ajanta while tracing the development of style in Indian painting. Cave 16 was a donation to the Buddhist Orders by Varāhadeva, the minister of Hariṣeṇa, one of the last rulers of the Vatsagulma branch of the Vākāṭaka dynasty. He ruled over a very considerable kingdom in the Deccan. The inscription in Cave 16 may be taken to suggest that Varāhadeva's father Hastibhoja, who was the minister in the previous reign, possibly continued in that capacity even in the early years of Hariṣeṇa's reign, and was succeeded by his son Varāhadeva in that office some time after Hariṣeṇa's accession to the throne. Hariṣeṇa's regnal years are variously thought to be *circa* A.D. 475 to A.D. 500 or A.D. 510. The period seems to be reasonably correct and I would not be surprised if A.D. 510 is more likely than A.D. 500 for the end of his reign. Varāhadeva administered the kingdom successfully as a minister over a period of years during which, it seems, extensive conquests were made by Hariṣeṇa. The minister also amassed a large store of religious merit, no doubt by various pious acts and donations. Thereafter came a phase in his life when, being greatly devoted to the Buddha, he regarded the sacred Law as his only companion and had the sacred dwelling (Cave 16) made.

This mental attitude of regarding the sacred Law as his only companion, after already having built up a large store of religious merit, seems to indicate a later phase in Varāhadeva's life, probably after a number of years of good government and the successful expansion of the kingdom, when a man who is religiously inclined is likely to increasingly seek refuge in the faith to which he is deeply attached. It was thus probably not till about A.D. 485, at the earliest, that work commenced on Cave 16 and was completed in a span of about two decades. Hariṣeṇa was still living when the inscription was engraved in that cave, describing its beauty. Whether the inscription specifically mentions paintings is not absolutely clear, but accepting the interpretation that it does, we may conclude that the paintings were also completed during the reign of Hariṣeṇa who is mentioned in the inscription as the king whom Varāhadeva served as a minister and whose minister he continued to be even after the completion of his donation.

Cave 17 belongs to approximately the same period, being a donation of a feudatory of Hariṣeṇa. The royal guilds of artisans of the Vākāṭaka rulers were probably available to execute the work for both the highly placed donors, and that may account for the fact that the paintings in Caves 16 and 17 form one stylistic group. Varāhadeva, probably while the work on Cave 16 was in progress, apparently desired to continue his pious benefactions by donating another cave-dwelling for the welfare of the Saṅgha. Accordingly we find that near by Ajanta, at Gulwada, only eleven miles from the former site, he got the Ghaṭotkaca cave-dwelling made. The inscription in the cave, which signifies that Hariṣeṇa was still king, may well belong to the very end of his reign. The cave has no paintings. Perhaps Hariṣeṇa's death took place at this time, and the troubled state of affairs which suddenly followed on his death may have caused Varāhadeva to suspend further work on the cave, being greatly preoccupied with pressing affairs of state.

It is thought, and not without reason, that Varāhadeva continued to be the minister of Hariṣeṇa's young son and successor and that the dynasty did not end with Hariṣeṇa, though it may have passed through difficult times. Certain architectural features of the Ghaṭotkaca Caves give us some indication as to the date of Caves 1 and 2, which appear to be somewhat later. They bear no inscription with regard to their donation. If Cave No. 1 was partly inspired by the Ghaṭotkaca Cave, then we may not be wrong in thinking that the completion and painting of Caves 1 and 2 was somewhere in the second quarter of the sixth century, before the Vākāṭaka power came to an end about A.D. 550. The paintings in Caves 1 and 2 intrinsically bespeak a later date than those in caves 16 and 17. It seems to me necessary on grounds of style to allow a generation gap of about twenty years between the style of painting in Caves 16 and 17 and that to be seen in Caves 1 and 2. This circumstance would lend some support to the supposition that Caves 1 and 2 belong to the second quarter of the 6th century. Though inscriptional evidence of the kind found in Caves 16 and 17 is lacking, we may assume that Caves 1 and 2 were also the result of the bounty of a Vākāṭaka minister, may be Varāhadeva in his very old age, or one of the Vākāṭaka feudatories such as the donor of Cave 17. Moreover the style and quality of the paintings in these two caves would suggest that whoever the donor was, he was able to utilize the skilled royal guilds to paint these caves just as the minister Varāhadeva and Hariṣeṇa's feudatory had done earlier in Caves 16 and 17. But the outlook, approach, and technique, of these later guild painters had considerably changed in the course of a generation through a process of natural development combined with outside influences. But I do not think that the painters of Caves 1 and 2 were members of new guilds. They were in all probability the younger descendants and pupils of the master painters of Caves 16 and 17 who had matured and in the course of about two decades or so had developed a more mannered, albeit very elegant, style. Basically I conceive the style of Caves 1 and 2 as having evolved out of that of Caves 16 and 17.

Even after A.D. 550, when Vākāṭaka sovereignty came to an end, the monastery of Ajanta was obviously inhabited. It was still famous in the 7th century A.D., for the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang, even though he never visited Ajanta, refers to it in glowing terms, basing himself no doubt on the accounts he had obtained from his contemporaries. Such a reference, without mentioning that it had been abandoned, would be unlikely if it had become deserted by the time of his visit. It is difficult to conclude that all artistic activity at Ajanta ceased after A.D. 500 or even earlier, merely because the Vākāṭaka patronage no longer existed. The obvious deterioration in the quality of some of the paintings suggests that they belong to the late 6th or even the

7th century A.D.

The story of Ajanta in the days of its finest achievements is that of vast walls teeming with painted life, where kings and princesses and all the paraphernalia of great courts mingle with an unending stream of human activity. Tales of Piety, Charity, and Love, are here unfolded with the sweep and grandeur of a master's brush, in a spirit of reverence to the Great One who preached a faith that once brought light and hope to millions in India. They were humble men who painted these scenes, but they had a vision which is given only to few. Not a vision of God, but a vision of life itself in its varied manifestations.

2

The Aftermath of Ajanta

In my last lecture I had indicated that the seeds of decline were to be found in Ajanta itself. As the great period neared its end, a predominantly hieratic approach is to be found in some of the paintings on the walls of this sanctuary. A repetition of the figure of the Buddha himself is on occasion preferred to the delightful *Jātaka* stories, which, though intended to emphasize the benign qualities of the Master, provided a means to paint a picture of contemporary life brimful of warmth and charm. Buddhism was slowly heading for the stranglehold of monkcraft and was fast losing its pristine fervour and simplicity. The dedication of painted and sculptured images of the Buddha was supposed to bring spiritual merit to the pious donor thereof.

The Vākāṭaka rulers had apparently given the services of the royal guilds to paint Caves 16, 17, 1 and 2, of which their ministers and feudatories were the benefactors. But it seems that later on there were also several private donors whose primary concern was not art but religious merit. Stylization no doubt had existed at Ajanta even in its best period and had created types. But these types were marked by graciousness and a lyrical quality which suffused them with an aura of enchantment. Though painted according to formula, each face called for separate attention, each attitude evoked admiration, each gesture had a different fascination. But the form of stylization which set in during the last days of Ajanta was somewhat dull and repetitive. The monotonous rows of Buddhas in the Miracle of Śrāvasti and other themes were the herald of a hieratic art lacking in liveliness and spontaneity. Coarser outlines, forms without elegance, colouring that lacked imagination, and somewhat heavy-handed brushwork, are all to be noticed. The emphasis had shifted from the *Jātaka* and *Avadāna* tales to iconic worship. The growth of Mahāyāna Buddhism had translated a great religious preceptor into a benevolent deity, the consecration of whose very image was conducive to divine favour. That such beliefs could in course of time lead to a 'frozen' style of image painting is a development that can be anticipated. The reaction on style was bound to be considerable. The painters had to carry out the requirements of their patrons and, since such requirements offered no scope and freedom to depict life in its many facets, their skill, such as it may have been, was under a curb. The repetition of one and the same theme, namely the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, began to lead to somewhat mechanical production, and this in its turn led to a decline in standards of drawing and colouring.

The old guild painters who had glorified Ajanta were master artists, while the new category of painters who had replaced them may more aptly be regarded as mere guild craftsmen. Now and then an individual figure of a Buddha or a Bodhisattva suggests a harking back to the old skills, but this last phase of production, judged as a whole, spells the falling off of standards both in execution and feeling. This reaction may partly have been hastened by the fact that the patrons of these latter day guild artists were content with mere image painting, and were not much concerned whether the images of which they were the donors were artistically conceived or not.

It must, however, be conceded that this later production has suffered in our eyes in comparison with the masterpieces of the Vākāṭaka age. If this later work could be divorced from the earlier production, we might find more merit in several of these iconic figures than we are apt to grant when we visit these caves and see them *in situ*. But even so, it has to be recognised that style in painting was slowly descending from levels of high artistry to the humdrum of craftsmanship with all its pitfalls of standardized production, many clichés, tight formulas, and easier acceptance of rigidity of line. You may however conclude when you visit Ajanta that even this later work has a certain beauty. This assessment would not be incorrect, for my remarks must be considered in relation to the circumstance that I am making a comparative study of style in these lectures.

Before we proceed further, it is necessary to consider the paintings at two other sites which evidence the extension of the Ajanta school, if I may so call it. At the Vaiṣṇava cave at Badami, in the district of Bijapur, there are fragmentary paintings on the inside of its roll cornice. There can be little doubt that they are contemporary with the construction of that cave, and hence can be assigned to *circa* A.D. 578, and be regarded as a donation of the Cālukyan prince Maṅgaleśvara to whose bounty this cave owes its construction. This cave pertains to the Brahmanical faith and not to the Buddhist creed. The identification of these fragmentary paintings is still somewhat uncertain. As regards their style, however, they are in the Ajanta manner. Here we have an indication that what is popularly known as the Ajanta style of the late fifth and early sixth centuries was not confined to Ajanta or Buddhist themes, but seems to have been a common heritage of the period even as late as A.D. 578. In this connection I must advert to the fact that while the murals of Caves 16 and 17 of the Vākāṭaka period were being painted at Ajanta or shortly before, we find that another brilliant guild of painters was working at the Buddhist caves of Bagh about a hundred and twenty miles from Indore, in Madhya Pradesh. Here the remains are very fragmentary and, what is more tragic, fast disappearing. On the verandah of the principal cave, which was once fully painted, there is a great procession scene with elephant riders, dancers, musicians, and throngs of people. It is comparable to the best work at Ajanta, and again stresses the point that the grand style of mural painting in India even in the late fifth and early sixth centuries was not confined to Ajanta. The style at Bagh is the product of Gupta art and the site itself is in the area of direct Gupta influence. Whether any artists from Bagh were employed in the Vākāṭaka kingdom when Caves 16 and 17 were being painted at Ajanta can only be a matter of speculation. We cannot even be certain of their respective dates. At Bagh also there were painted ceilings, though here again little remains. One panel of a mother hen with her chickens, though the colour has disappeared, is particularly delightful and indicates the essentially human approach which the painters brought to their task when the occasion afforded the opportunity to deviate from planned themes. Both at Ajanta in the Vākāṭaka period and at Bagh, it is interesting to observe that somewhat sombre colour effects are heightened by a brilliant lapis blue. That this stylistic device in colouring should be common to both sites is not likely to be a mere coincidence. My own thinking is that it was first introduced at the Gupta site of Bagh and thence travelled to the Vākāṭaka regions along with other features of Gupta art.

This homogeneity in style in various parts of the country can be accounted for by the fact that master artists from one kingdom may have been commissioned to supervise the benefactions in another territory. We have an inscription in the Virūpākṣa temple at Pattadakal, near Badami in Bijapur district, one of the great temple sites of the Cālukyan kings, in which it is recorded that the builder of the temple was the greatest *sūtradhāri* (architect) of the South. He was evidently brought there by the Cālukyan king Vikramāditya II, after his victory over the Pallava ruler in one of the perpetual wars which these two dynasties waged against each other. It is a fitting commentary on the culture of the age that even a victorious monarch was not blind to the beauty of the architectural and sculptural style prevailing in the realm of his defeated rival, and had no hesitation in importing an architect from his rival's dominions to work in his own kingdom. There may be other reasons also for this homogeneity of style in different areas at one and the same period, such as similarity in guild training due to different guilds following the same *śilpa* text. In this connection, we must not forget that side by side with religious benefactions there must also have been a considerable output of painting and sculpture for purely secular purposes, and thus ideas and methods may have travelled from one kingdom to another, occasioned by diverse causes.

Moreover, in the fifth century, the influence of Gupta art had to some extent an unifying effect on art production in many parts of India. Another factor of importance in the formation of style has been that Indian artists in most periods have been very receptive to outside influences, and have had no hesitation in incorporating new ideas and techniques into their accustomed methods of execution. The use of lapis blue was probably first introduced to the Indian guilds by artists from the north-west. The presence of some foreign artists at Ajanta is evident from the bacchanalian scenes on the ceilings there, one of which is often but quite erroneously called the Persian embassy to the court of the Cālukyan king Pulakeśin II. Incidentally, this king was not even born when the best work at Ajanta was already over! But there is no denying the influence of Sassanian painting in these scenes.

There is one more site which establishes that the Ajanta style, though declining fast at Ajanta itself, preserved some of its original excellence as late as the eighth-ninth centuries at the Jain cave-shrine of Sittanavasal in the South, in Pudukottai State. Here again what remains is little indeed, but the few figures, male and female, which are still to be seen, evidence that flow of line and mannered beauty of form and countenance which we had seen in Caves 1 and 2 at Ajanta. There is also a painted ceiling with a lotus pool in which aquatic creatures are swimming and Gandharvas are sporting, which is also fully reminiscent of Ajanta. But this is the last known flicker of the grand manner of painting of the Ajanta guilds, and thereafter new trends in style begin to appear which, as we have already seen, had been heralded by the depiction of staid iconic forms in the last days of Ajanta itself.

Some very fragmentary painting of the Pallava period in the eighth century, during the reign of the great temple builder Rājasiṁha, exists in South India at the Kailāsanāth temple at Kanchipuram and the temple at Panamalai. All that one can say is that it evidences a post-Ajanta style of considerable merit but no great imagination, judging from the little that remains. A female figure at Panamalai has, however, something of that dreamy tenderness and grace which we find in some of the female figures at Ajanta of the Vākāṭaka period. Though we may talk of an 8th-9th century Pāṇḍyan style at Sittanavasal, an 8th century Pallava style at Kanchipuram, and a late 6th century Cālukyan style at Badami, we must ever remain conscious of the fact that all these local schools are emanations of a great mural tradition which existed in the late fifth and early sixth centuries A.D., and which from the site where its remains are predominant we call the Ajanta tradition. It was in the main the product of two great streams of art, namely, the early Śātavāhana painting and *stūpa* bas-reliefs of the Krishna Valley, intermingled with the classical idioms of Gupta art of the fifth century A.D.

We will now trace a new development in style, or should we rather say the retrogression of style, in Indian painting. Once it was thought that when the last painter put down his brush at Ajanta, the story of mural painting in India had ended. That this is not true you must already have realized from what I have said about Sittanavasal and other sites. There was also a revival of mural traditions in the ninth century at the famous rock-cut temples of Ellora. In some of the Jain caves known as the Indra Sabhā group, the walls and ceilings were quite elaborately painted with flying couples so commonly seen at Ajanta. They are all semi-divine beings of the Jain pantheon, just as those of Ajanta belonged to the Buddhist pantheon. Though formerly they were hardly visible, they have through scientific cleaning processes been restored in some measure to their original condition. In addition to the many flying couples there are also images of Tīrthaṅkaras. The latter suffer from the same defects of style as those to which I had adverted while dealing with the last phase of Ajanta. They are for iconic worship. They fulfil their purpose but lack feeling, being painted to a required hieratic pattern. Maybe they can be regarded as satisfying the Jain canon for attainment of emancipation: aloof, emotionless, and coldly detached from the warmth of life and nature. The guilds no doubt did what was required of them by their rich Jain patrons, but in the process their own style hardened. The drawing is quite competent and the colouring not unattractive. As examples of mediaeval period wall painting, the Ellora murals possess great historical importance. But they strike no emotional response in the beholder and the eyes get weary at the sameness of execution. The thrill which remains ever present, while the spectator views the constantly changing scene on the walls of Ajanta, no longer exists.

It is not that the Jains did not possess a store of tales and legends to draw upon. There are Jain *Jātaka* tales, and the lives of the Tīrthaṅkaras had also gathered around them the usual cycle of miraculous happenings and acts of piety, charity and sacrifice. It is a comment on the times in which these mediaeval guilds functioned that those in whose power it lay to employ them usually wanted no more than an immediate need fulfilled—the obtaining of pious merit and divine blessing by adorning a temple with painted Tīrthaṅkaras and attendant beings. If the guilds became apathetic and listless in their technique, they were not entirely to blame. Their services were no longer sought in the pursuit of rendering religious beliefs and stories pictorially with as much beauty and skill as was obtainable. The thematic content became narrowed, and the guilds lacked the opportunity to reveal what their skills were capable of. Had it been otherwise, the development of mediaeval painting may conceivably have proceeded on more interesting lines. We have a better idea of the capabilities of the Ellora artists in the flying figures which inhabit the ceilings of the Jain rock temples. The inspiration is obviously from the flying figures of the Ajanta caves. Here we have proof that, when permitted the necessary freedom and granted the necessary patronage, the mediaeval guilds could rise above the cold stereotyped production manifested in seated and standing Tīrthaṅkara images. The flying figures of Ellora, even if somewhat monotonously repeated, are quite graceful, though they lack the animation, sculptural qualities and rhythm of their beautifully painted counterparts at Ajanta.

But apart from the wall paintings of the Jain caves at Ellora, there are also a few fragments of paintings to be seen on pillars and ceilings at the great monolithic temple of Kailāsa. They belong to different periods and range from the 8th to the 12th century. Bearded horsemen and infantrymen in formal serried battle array are a pointer to what we shall presently deal with, namely the early Jain manuscript paintings of Gujarat. They can be dated to the 12th century. So also we have fragmentary scenes of the 8th and 9th centuries in which Brahmanical deities are seen. One of these fragments, probably of the 9th century, is of unusual interest, for here we see clichés which were to remain a feature of Jain manuscript painting for centuries to come. These clichés consist of sharply pointed noses and the projection of the farther eye into space when the face is shown in profile. There is already a hint of this latter cliché in some of the figures in Cave 2 at Ajanta, which is one of the latest of the Vākāṭaka group. Its origin is not easy to understand. The learned Jain monk, Muni Jinvijayji, once suggested to me that it may be due to the fact that the guild masters of the later period felt that the face of a deity or heavenly being in profile, with only the nearer eye shown, might give the impression to the worshipper that the godhead was one-eyed, which was not desirable. Hence a hieratic formula came into being, that when a face in profile was shown, the appearance of both the eyes must be assured to the spectator by the device of projecting the farther eye into space beyond the outline of the face. Once the device was adopted for deities, it was also applied to human beings, not only for faces strictly in profile but also for those in three-quarter profile. The suggestion is a plausible one, but there may be other explanations.

There is so little wall painting left at the Kailāsa temple that it is difficult to make a proper assessment of its quality. Nevertheless it can be said that here we have a mediaeval idiom. The tendency is towards fixity of iconographic types, formal patterns and limited compositions. The *joie de vivre* of Ajanta is totally absent. The work may be regarded as an adequate decorative formulation for specific hieratic purposes, but it can lay no claim to be a manifestation capable of inducing an emotional response. Attitudes have developed stylized stances, facial expressions lack variety, and there is often a feeling of ennui even in the more graceful forms. It is no longer the enfoldment of the kernel of a faith as at Ajanta, but a portrayal of its trappings. An altered concept of mural painting had led to the development of a style in which the painter had become the strict grammarian of an iconographic canon, and lacked the faculty to explore the depths of expression. Nevertheless it would not be correct to say that the mediaeval idiom can afford no satisfaction or visual enjoyment.

Before we leave the topic of style in mediaeval mural painting, we have to consider the eleventh century murals of the Rājarājeśvara temple of Tanjore, built by the famous Coḷa king Rājarāja I. They are in a dark corridor of the temple, and deal amongst other things with the life of the Śaiva saint, Sundaramūrti Svāmī. Here also there is an echo of the Ajanta style, though the painting is nowhere so fluent or impressive. Some of the scenes however, such as a group of female dancers and Sundaramūrti ascending into heaven on an elephant, are not without considerable merit. The discovery of these Coḷa murals indicates that, at least in South India, as late as the early eleventh century there existed painter guilds which were active and whose style of painting was descended from the Ajanta tradition. Though the Coḷa murals cannot be equated with the great period of Vākāṭaka painting, the style does at times capture something of the lissome forms and rich earthy colouring seen at Ajanta.

The paucity of mediaeval wall painting is probably due to more than one circumstance. The decline of Buddhism resulted in the patronage of the painter guilds by the Buddhist orders coming to an end. Moreover, the benefactions of Hindu kings in the mediaeval age seem to be principally concerned with the building of more and more elaborate temples decorated with a wealth of intricate sculpture. Wall painting as a means of decoration in the service of religion began to lose the popularity it once enjoyed, and this in its turn led to a decline in the activities of painter guilds, there probably not being sufficient work to keep them all occupied.

Some centuries thereafter, there was again a revival of mural painting in South India during the rule of the Vijayanagar kings in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while a little later in Kerala we find both temples and palaces, such as those of Padmanabhapuram and Mattancheri, painted during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a characteristic Kerala idiom, derived no doubt from the specialised terpsichorean art forms which have long prevailed in this part of the country, such as the famous Kathakali dance-dramas. It is a highly stylized and florid idiom of limited appeal, but possessing a quaint charm in its exaggeration of facial types and costumes. Some of the best work of the Vijayanagar period is to be found at the Lepakshi temple in Andhra Pradesh. Though not an art of a high order it provides a pictorial commentary on costumes, ornamentation, male and female types, head-dress, coiffure, and other elements of social life in this mighty South Indian Hindu empire, which at the height of its glory under Kṛṣṇadeva Rāya (A.D. 1511–1528) stretched from coast to coast, and the munificence of whose rulers in decorating temples became proverbial. Neither the Vijayanagar nor the Kerala style is in any manner even an echo of the Ajanta tradition. They both represent late mediaeval developments of a decorative order, with an iconographic bias towards mythological incidents and epic legends. They are not a logical development from the mainstream of style in Indian mural painting, but late independent manifestations of a pictorial urge. The influence of Vijayanagar painting on the early miniature painting of the Deccan in the sixteenth century will be dealt with hereafter. One characteristic of the Vijayanagar style is the use of textile patterns to dominate a colour scheme. The device, though unusual, harmonises well with the tableau-like composition and the feeling that the figures are derived from a stage art of mime. Even when there is action, it is suggestive of the bravura of a folk drama.

I have so far been considering wall painting, and it is now relevant to inquire what other forms of painting existed from early times. That there were other forms of painting is known to us from literary sources. Thus there were paintings on cloth and on wooden boards, and even on objects such as shields probably made from tough hide. But such paintings no longer exist and we have no means of judging their style. Paper did not make its appearance in India till a fairly late date and thus manuscript production had to utilize palm leaves and birch bark as carriers. We do not know if prior to the eleventh century any illustrated manuscripts existed. Even literary references are wanting or too vague to be convincing. But from the eleventh century onwards, a new form of painting came into vogue, namely, the illustration of certain religious texts of the Jains and the Buddhists written on palm leaf, and the preparation of painted wooden boards as outer covers for these illustrated manuscripts. Here we have the very first known beginnings of a style of miniature painting in India.

Under the Pāla kings of Bengal in Eastern India, where Buddhism still had a hold in the eleventh century, we find illustrated Buddhist canonical texts on palm leaf. The style is reminiscent of Ajanta on a miniature scale. This circumstance implies that the Ajanta style was not forgotten, and was still regarded as the model of perfection to follow. Usually Buddhist deities are depicted, but scenes from the life of the Buddha are also to be found. Some of the work is rather coarse, but in the finer manuscripts these tiny paintings, on the narrow palm leaves, are rather exquisite. It is an interesting development, for it required quite a different technique to adapt the style of a mural painter to the art of miniature painting. The colouring is usually sober, another characteristic derived from Ajanta. The draughtsmanship, when the work is of a refined order, can be firm and careful, though owing to the small format it can never achieve a real bold sweep of line which is to be found in the best murals.

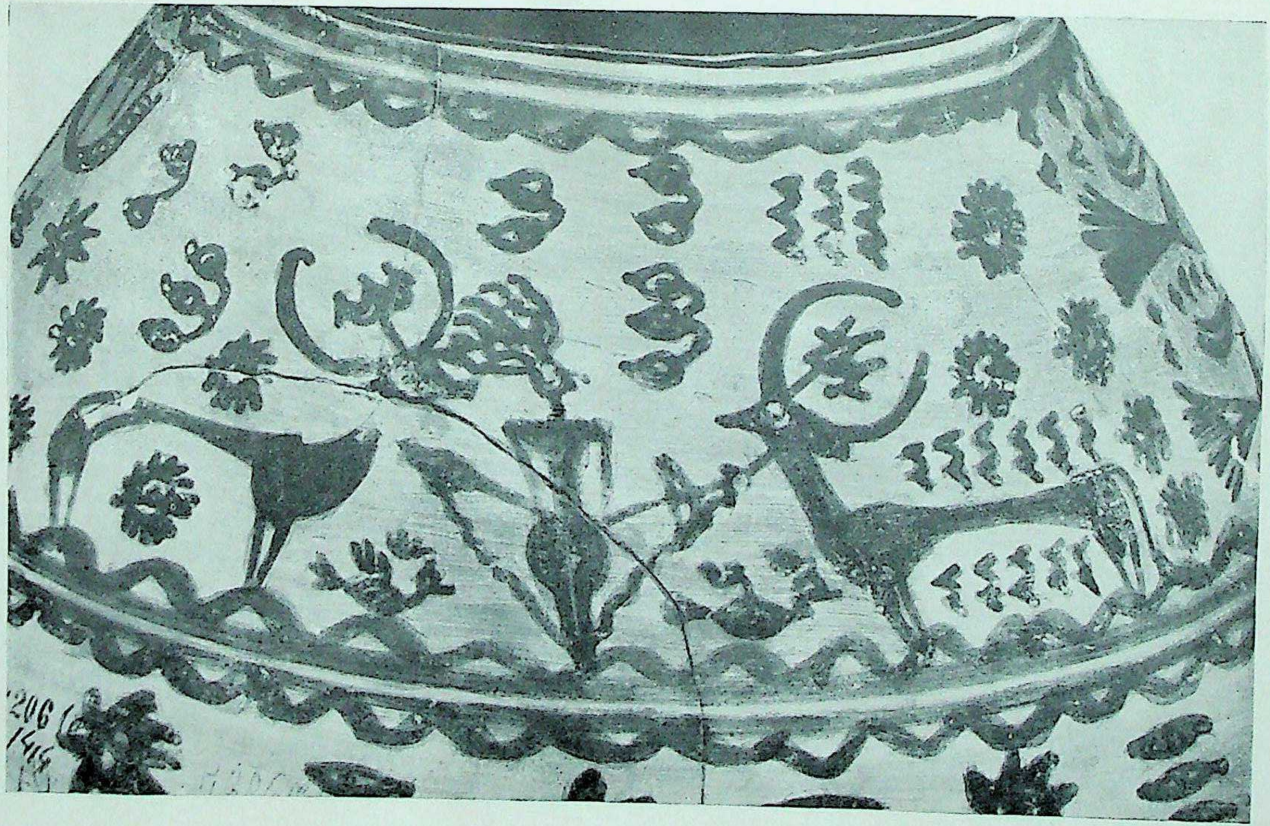


Plate I: Painted pottery design. Mohenjo-daro, *c.* 2500–1750 B.C.

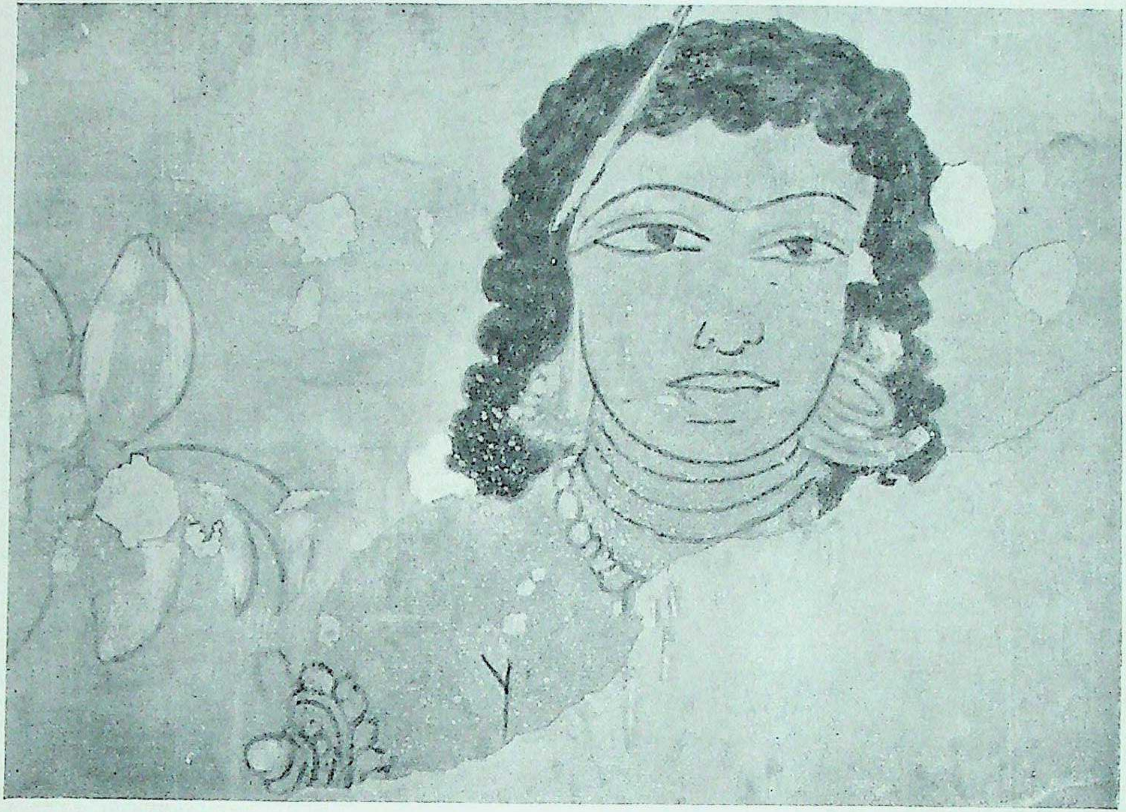


Plate II: Male head. Fresco painting, Bagh, fifth century A.D.

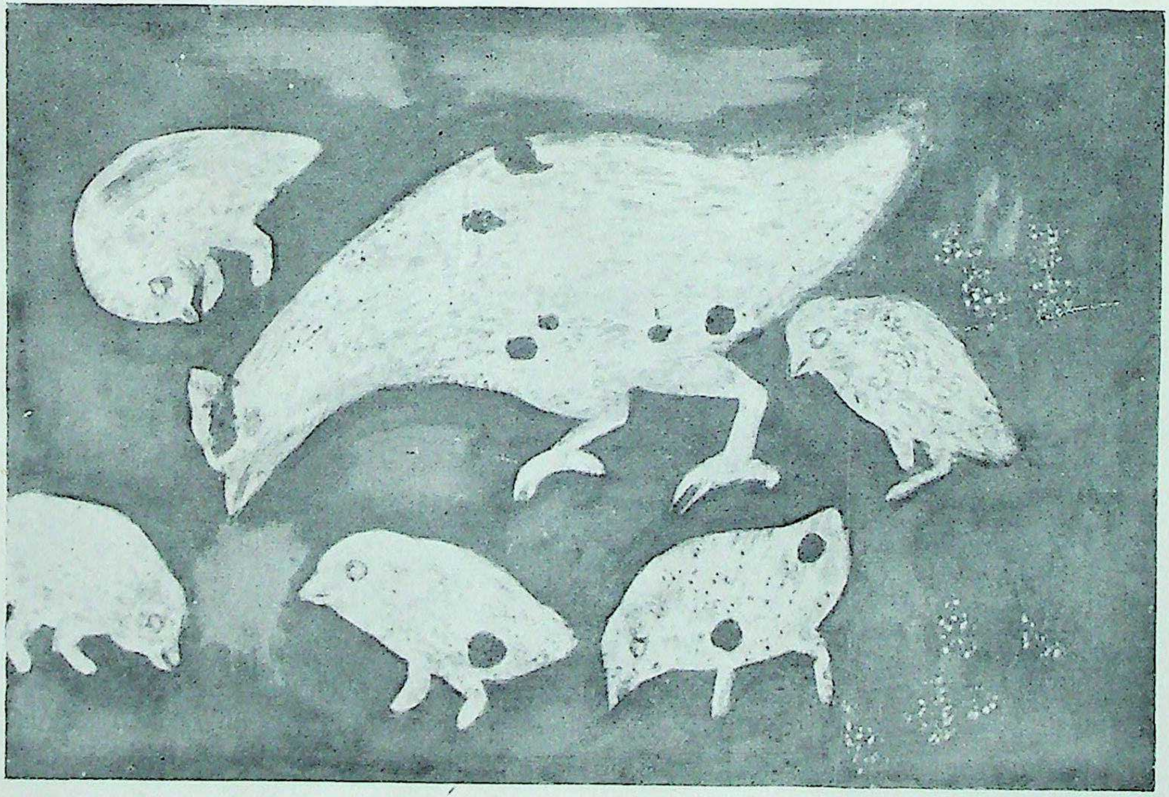


Plate III: Hen and chickens. Fresco painting, Bagh, fifth century A.D.

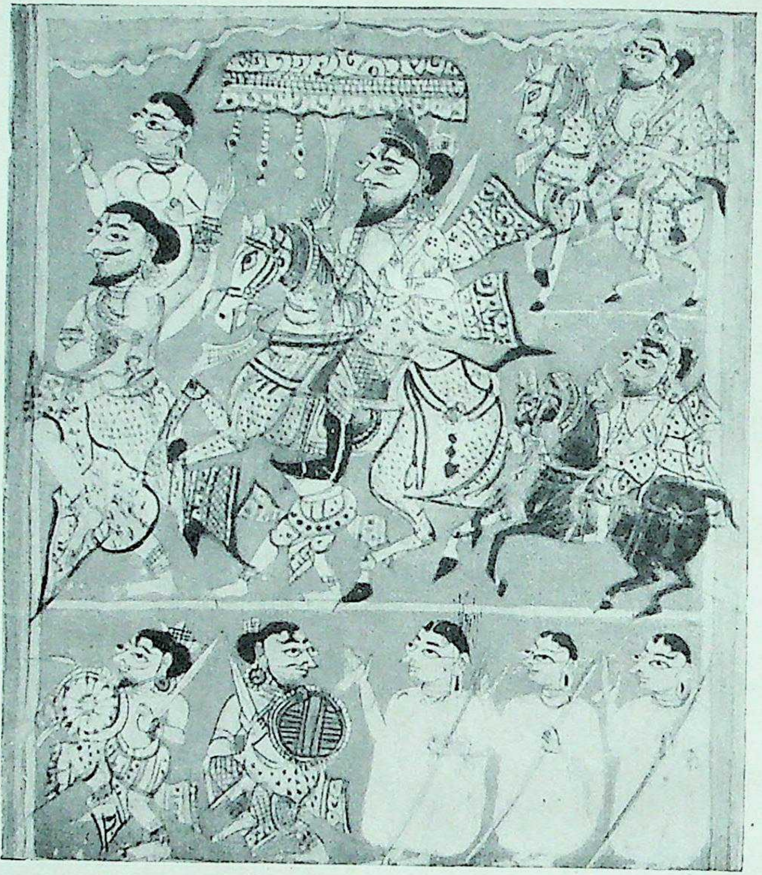


Plate IV: Gardabhilla. From an illustrated MS of the *Kālakācārya Kathā*. Western Indian or Gujarati School, A.D. 1415, P.C. Jain Collection, Bombay.

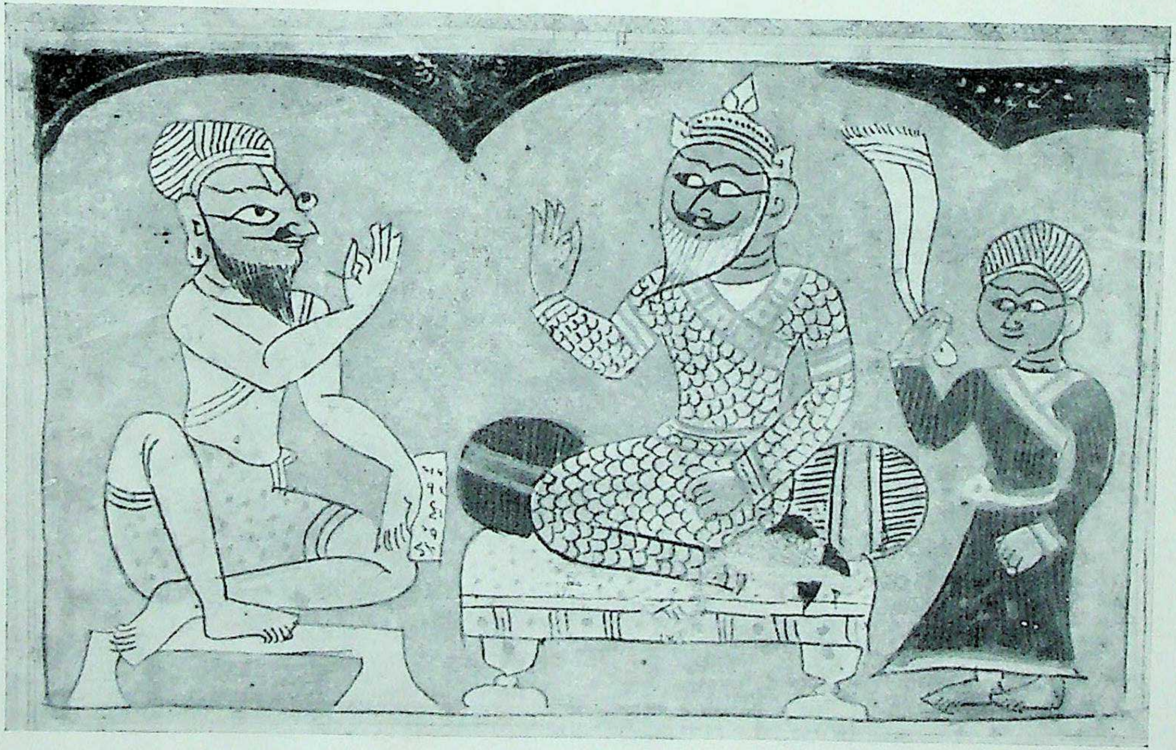


Plate V: Folio from the *Sikandarnāmā*. Probably done in Uttar Pradesh-Delhi, late fifteenth century A.D.

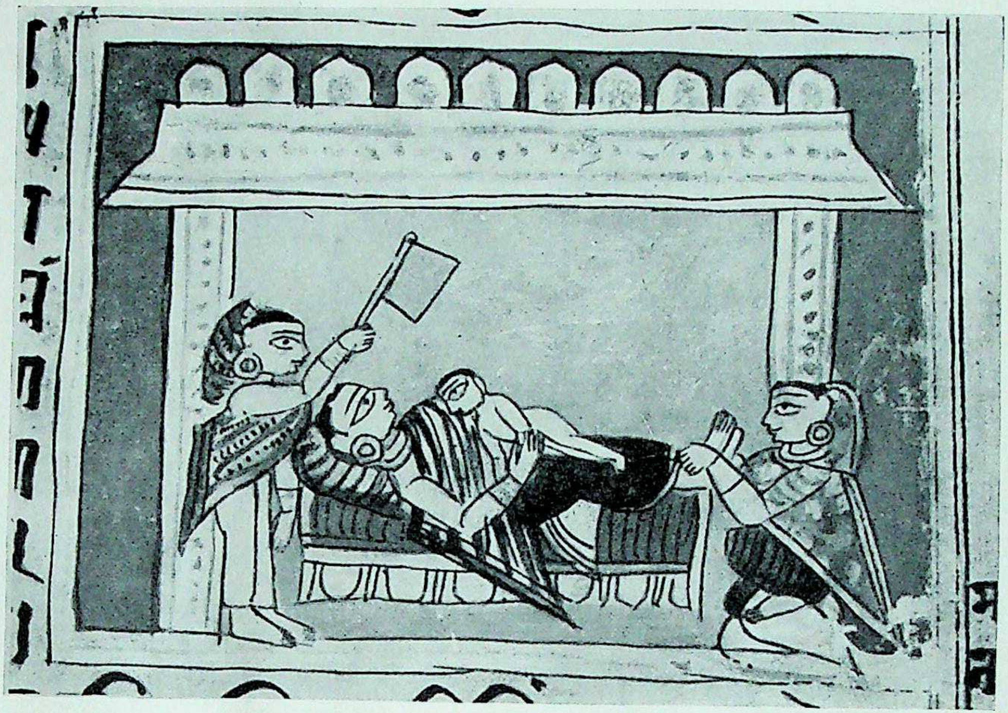


Plate VI: Mother and child. From the *Mahāpurāṇa* painted at Palam, near Delhi, A.D. 1540, Shri-Digambara Jain Atisaya Kshetra, Jaipur.

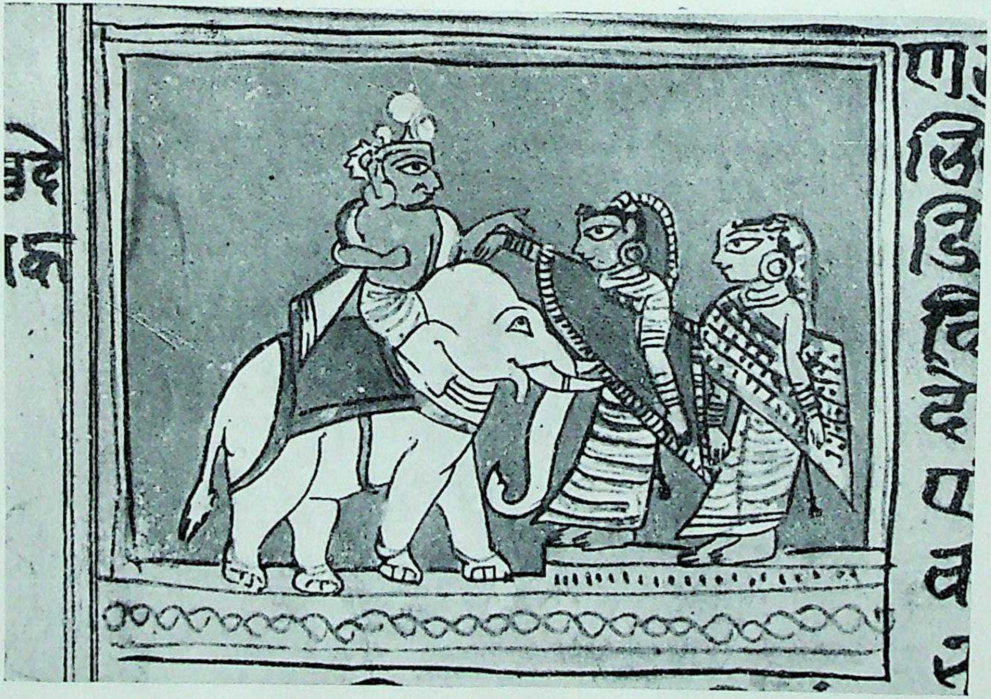


Plate VII: Marudevī (?). From the same MS as Plate VI.

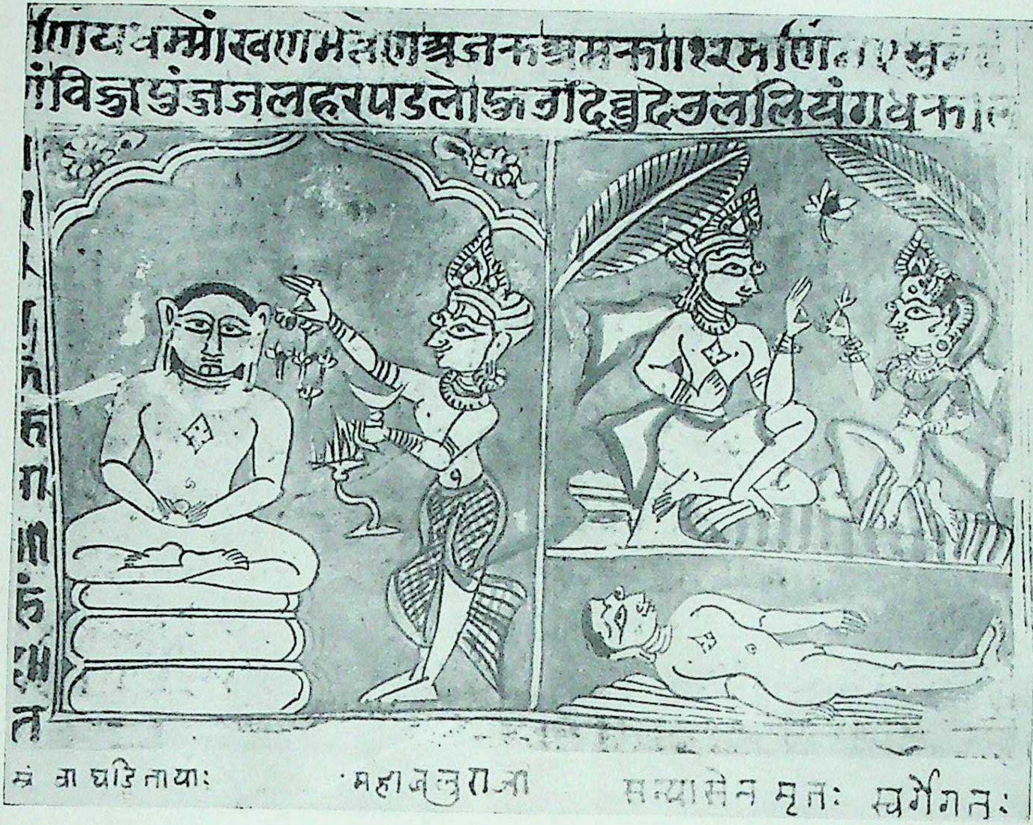


Plate VIII: Folio from the *Mahapurāṇa*. Influence of the Western India or Gujarati School *c.* third quarter of the fifteenth century A.D., Shri Digambara Naya Mandir, Delhi.

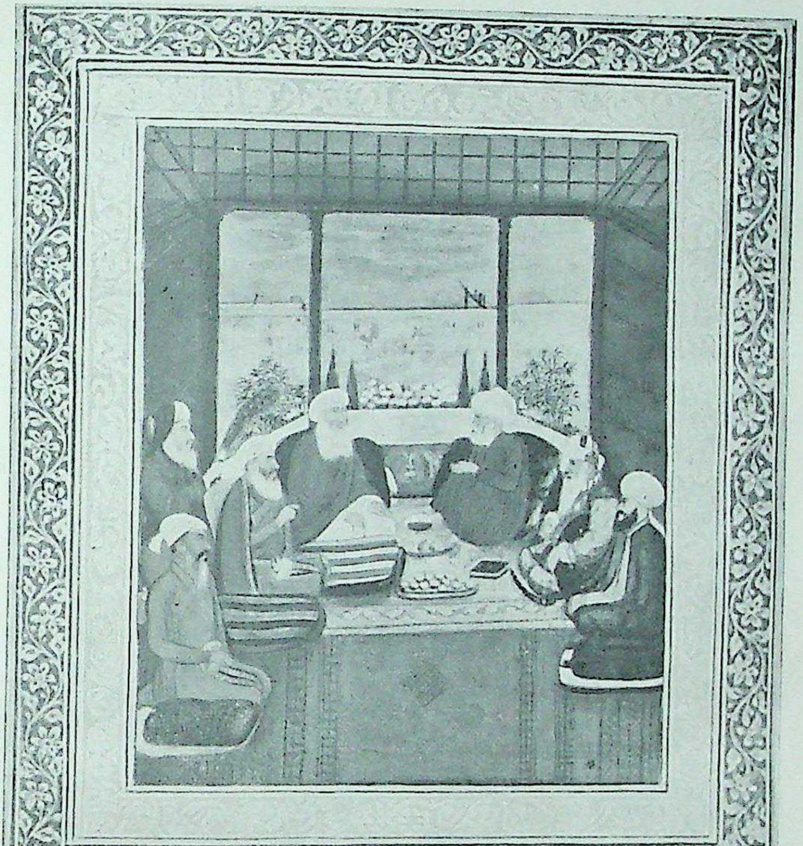


Plate IX: A group of holy men. By Lal Chand, Mughal School, *c.* A.D. 1630–1650, Shāh Jehān period, formerly in the Ardeshir Collection, Bombay.

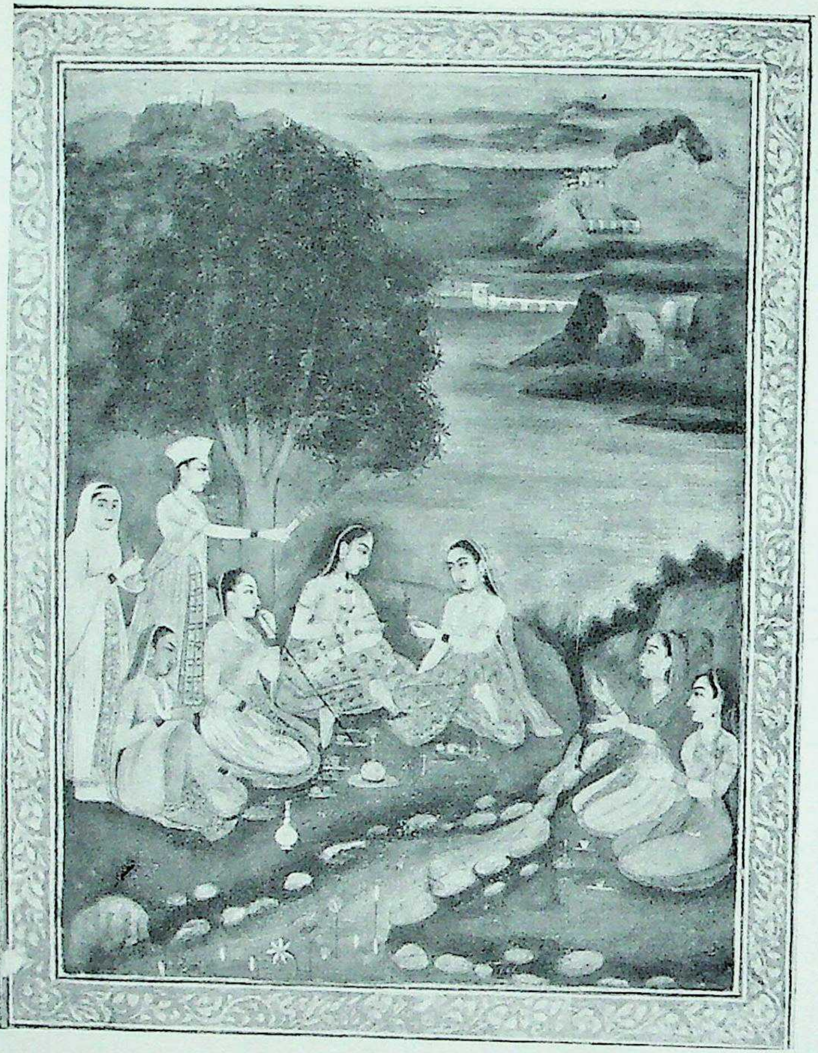


Plate X: Ladies picnicking. Mughal School, late seventeenth century A.D., Aurangzīb period, formerly in the Ardeshir Collection, Bombay.

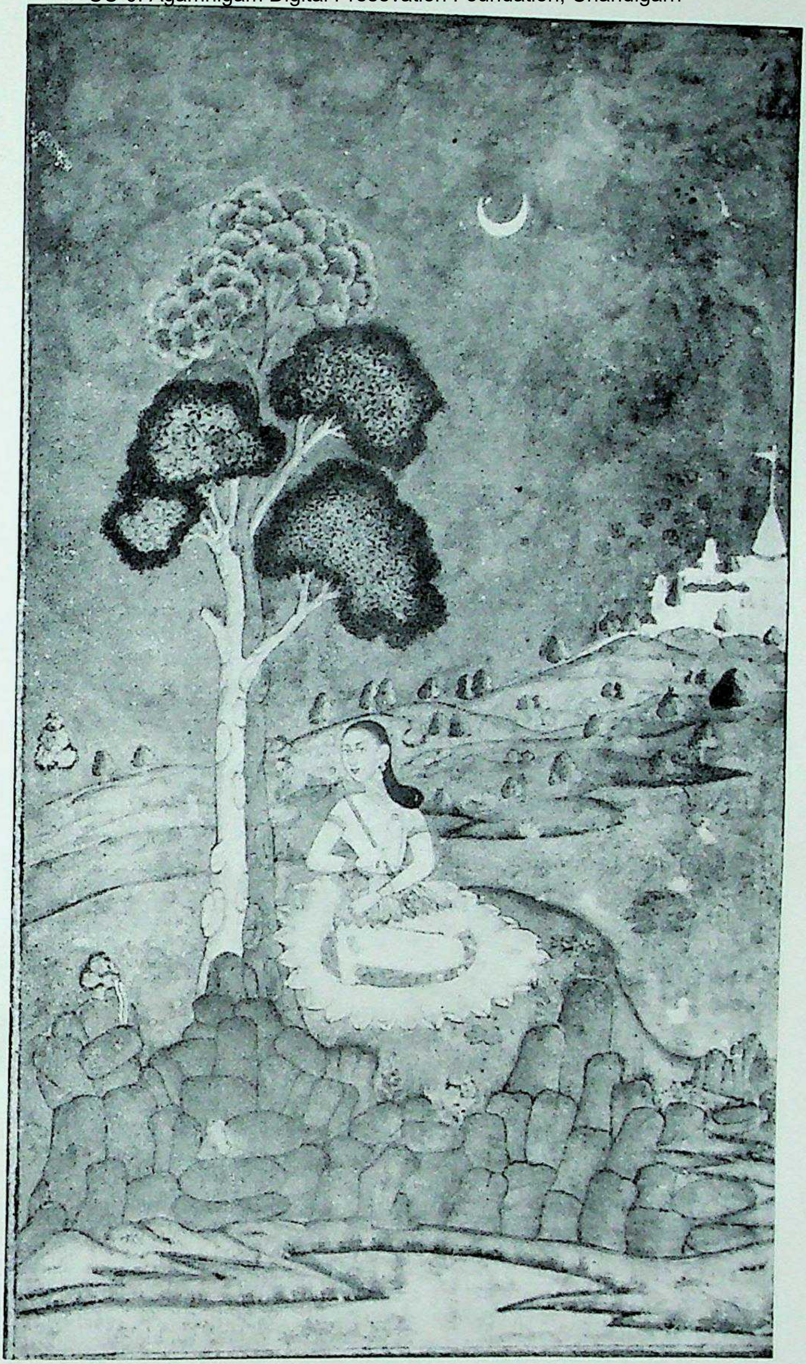
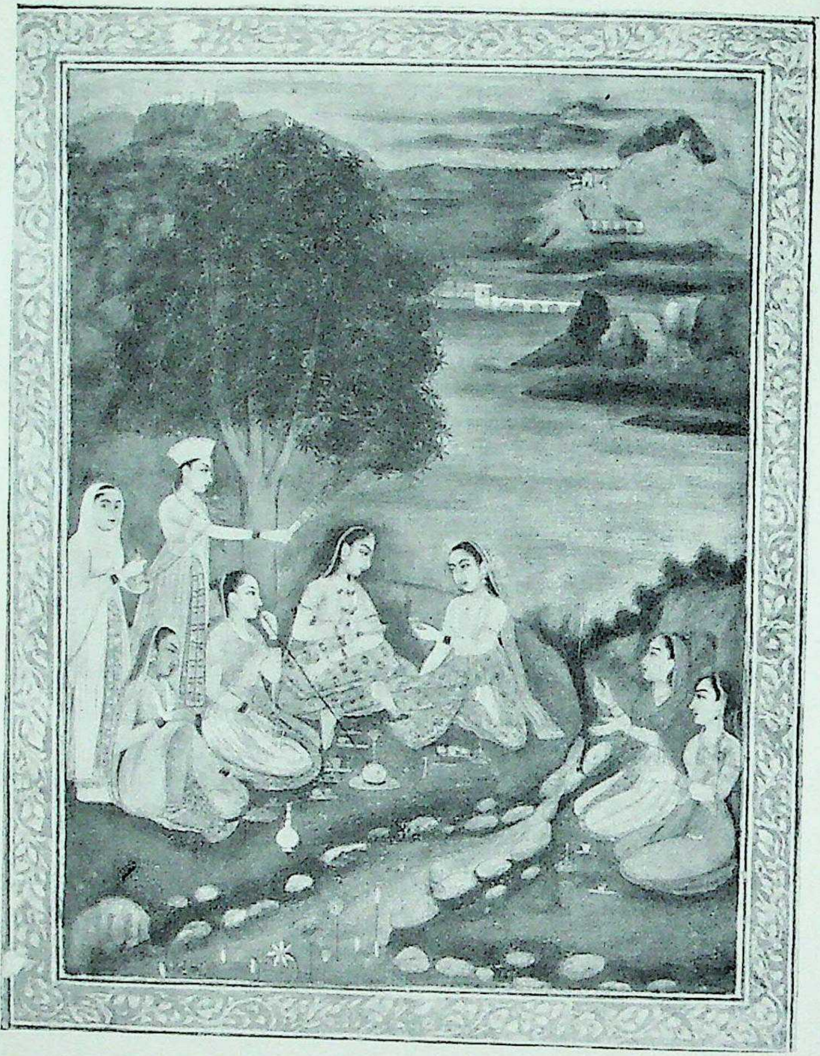


Plate XI: Rāgini Gauḍa Malhār. Deccani School, Golconda, late seventeenth century A.D., Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.



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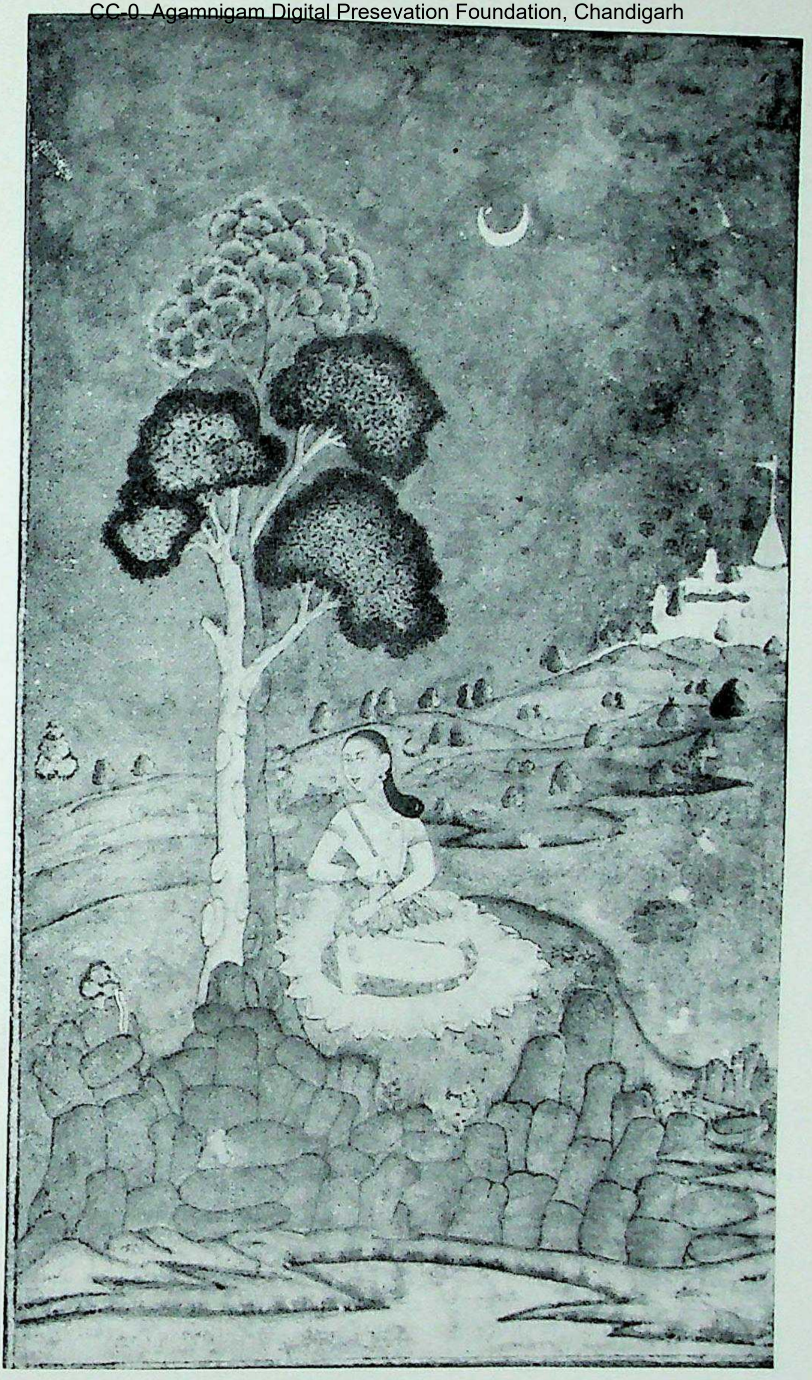

Plate XI: Rāgini Gauḍa Malhār. Deccani School, Golconda, late seventeenth century A.D., Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.

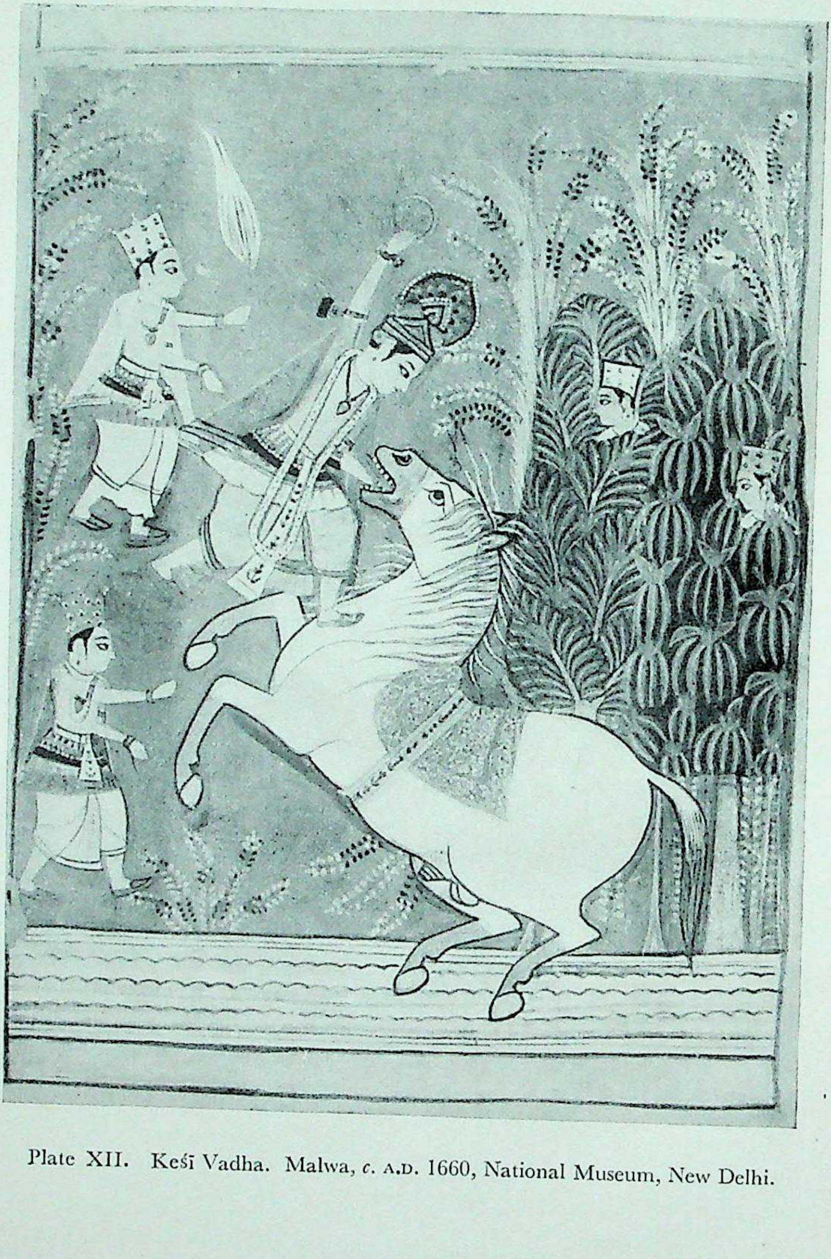

Plate XII. Keśī Vadha. Malwa, *c.* A.D. 1660, National Museum, New Delhi.

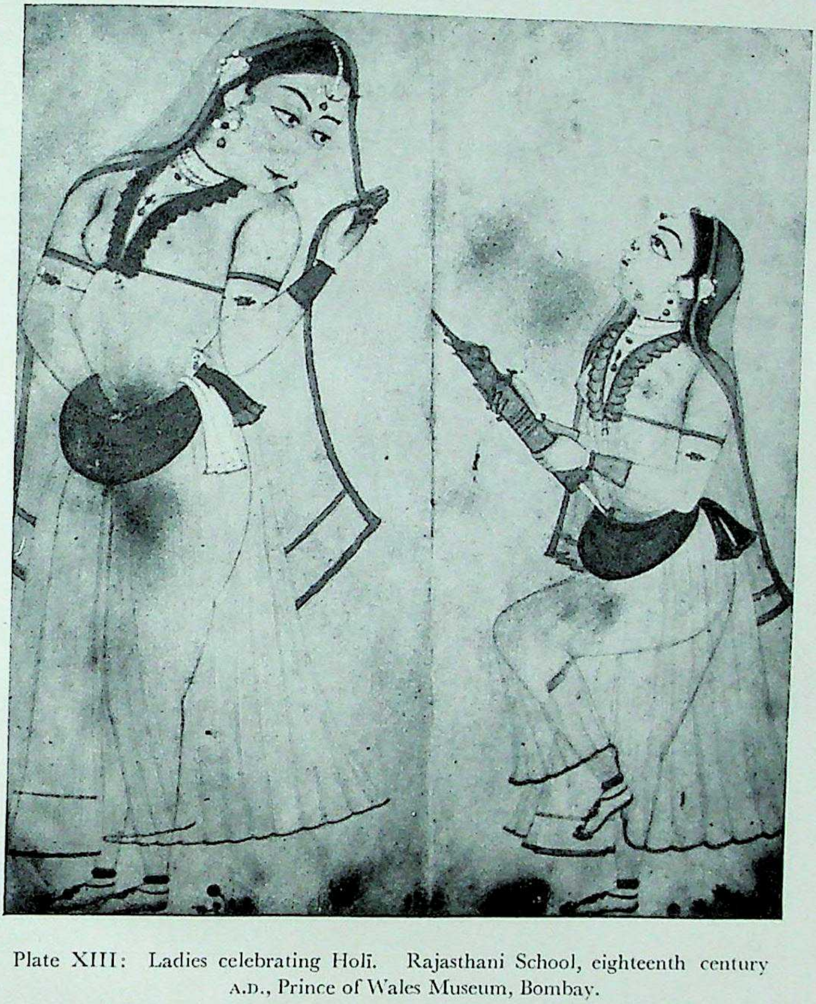

Plate XIII: Ladies celebrating Holī. Rajasthani School, eighteenth century A.D., Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.

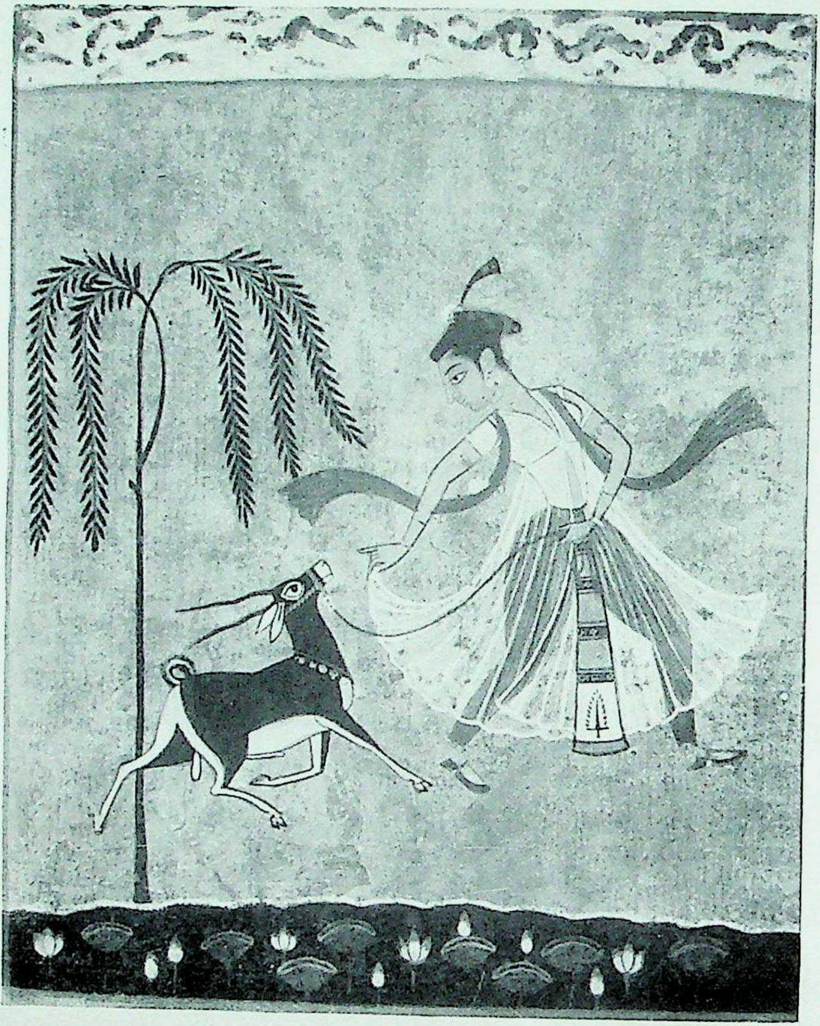

Plate XIV: Lady and a deer. Basohli type, early eighteenth century A.D., Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.

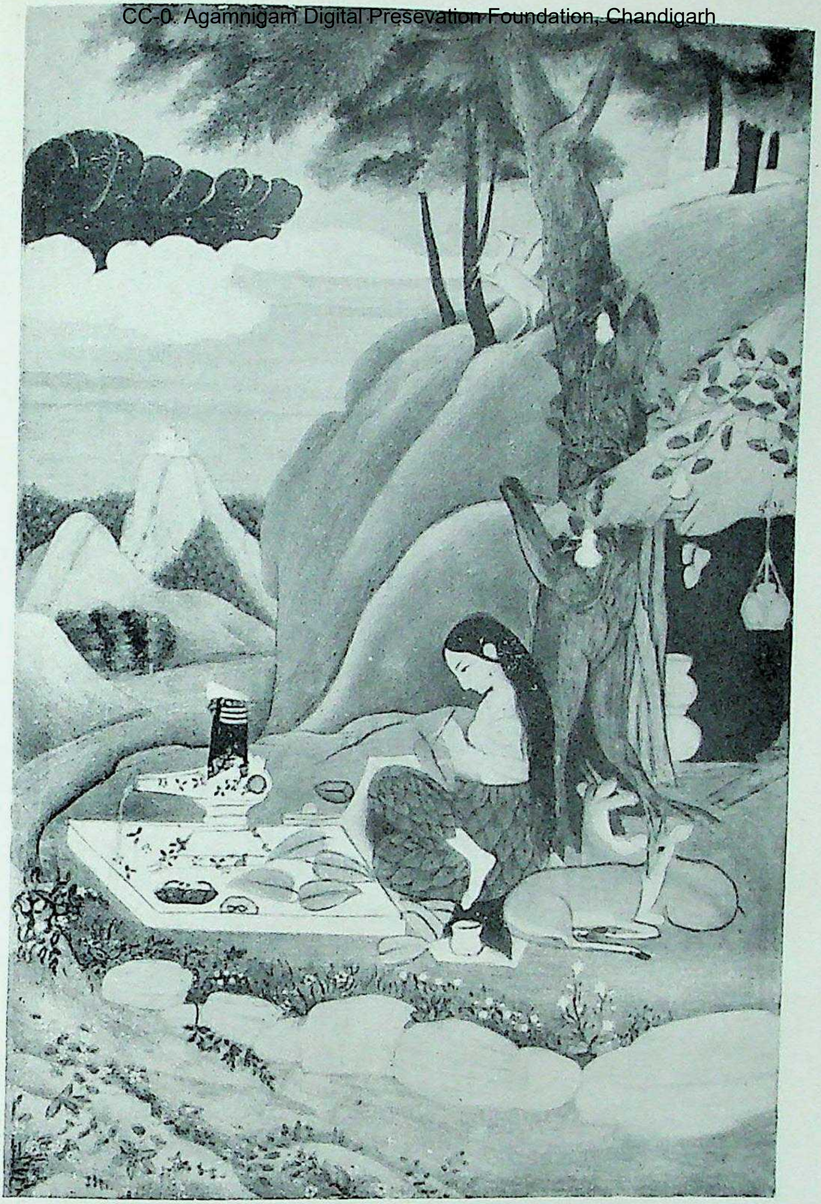

Plate XV: Lady writing a letter. Pahari School, probably Chamba, late eighteenth century A.D., Goa.

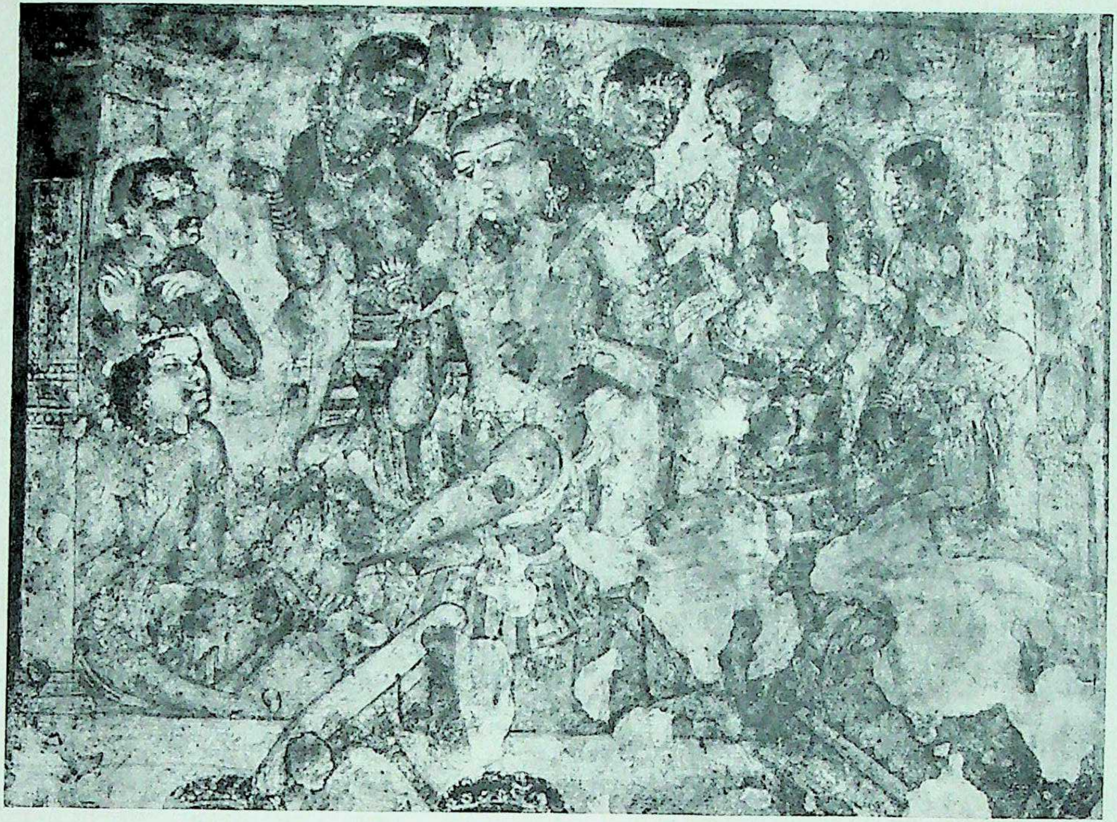

Plate XVI: The Ajanta Nagara Jataka.

The attitudes of deities and the stances of attendant figures affect the graces of Ajanta, and in the depiction of incidents simplicity of composition is resorted to for effective narration, while crowding of figures is avoided. This form of art has an attraction of its own, though very different from that of Jain manuscript painting which we will presently consider. Moreover the style is in keeping with the usual notions of miniature art, though this cannot be said of the Jain palm leaf illustrations which are not so meticulously executed. Much of this work, it seems, was done by the Buddhist monks in the great Buddhist universities such as those of Nālanda and Vikramaśīla and not by guild craftsmen. Even though it was a labour of devotion and faith, the monk painters who illustrated these palm leaf manuscripts had obviously developed with practice, added to their natural aptitude, into illustrators sometimes as well skilled as any professional would be. On the other hand the work of illustrating the Jain manuscripts of Gujarat was almost entirely done by guild craftsmen.

In the province of Gujarat in Western India, whether by coincidence or derivation from the Buddhist practice or as a common heritage of which nothing is known, there was great activity in the production of illustrated manuscripts dealing with the Jain canonical texts, such as the *Kalpasūtra* and the *Kālakācāryakathā*, and a high degree of stylization was evolved more in keeping with the 9th century paintings in the Kailāsa cave at Ellora than with the work at Ajanta. Here again the early manuscript illustrators were content to depict the Jain deities somewhat tiresomely in miniature size on the palm leaves. But in marked contrast, the decoration of the wooden cover boards of manuscripts is quite fascinating. The spirit of the Ajanta ceilings comes into being in several of them, with meandering vines and floral roundels in which well modelled human figures, birds and animals, are to be seen. An extraordinary feature of one of these *pāṭlīs* from the Jain Bhandar at Jaisalmer is the presence of a giraffe, which may have been sent as a present to an Indian king by a foreign ruler and was seen by the painter, whose amazement at the sight of this outlandish creature is expressed with commendable skill on the *pāṭlī*. Incidentally, I may remind you that in the *Jātaka* tales we hear of rare Indian birds being exported to foreign lands. Thus we have, so to say, a duality of styles in this form of Gujarati painting. When the artist was freed from the restraints of religious injunctions, his style acquired freedom of expression and his brush was guided by his imagination and the tradition of Ajanta. Though he had never seen Ajanta, the circumstance that glimmerings of this style are found on the *pāṭlīs* tells its own story. It implies that the style of Ajanta had permeated, through the centuries, into many parts of the country, and still remained an ideal to imitate when permissible, wherever guilds of painter-craftsmen existed. Here again the technique is of a miniaturist translating, as it were, wall paintings of large size on to the narrow wooden boards of manuscript covers. This skill could not have been suddenly acquired, and we can only conclude that before the art of the painted *pāṭlīs* became a vogue from the late eleventh or early twelfth century onwards, the ancestors of the craftsmen who painted such *pāṭlīs* must have been mural painters who worked in the tradition of Ajanta and had handed down their decorative skills from generation to generation, till we see the last echo of their style on these wooden manuscript covers. But this decorative *pāṭlī*-style had a short-lived span of achievement, and seems to have disappeared by the middle of the 12th century. Thereafter these painted *pāṭlīs*, with rare exceptions, become less interesting though still colourful.

In the fourteenth century an innovation of the highest importance to painting, and consequently to the development of style, occurred. It was the use of paper which now began to supplant the palm leaves for manuscript production. Paper had been introduced into India even before the fourteenth century, but its popularity as a base or carrier for painting dates from this period. At the beginning, the scribes of the religious texts were apt to use narrow horizontal sheets to somewhat resemble the narrow palm leaves. But soon they began to use broader sheets of paper though retaining the horizontal format. Spaces were left on these sheets for being filled in with paintings by those who were allotted the task of illustrating these texts. The introduction of paper gave greater freedom to the painter, and from now on we begin to find not only the Jain deities but various incidents being illustrated in these religious texts. But it is not the style of the decorative *pāṭlīs* in the Ajanta tradition. It is an artificial style with a formula all its own, in which the farther projecting eye, which was seen in a modified form at Ellora, now becomes a regular cliché, meaningless to us but perhaps possessing a significance with regard to which we can only make conjectures. No *śilpa* text has been discovered which entails the observance of this feature, but nevertheless it became a practice of universal acceptance in the illustration of Jain manuscripts not only in Gujarat but also in Mandu, and even as far afield as Jaunpur in Uttar Pradesh, where Jain communities flourished. It is even seen in some Buddhist manuscripts. The faces are also rigidly stylized with sharp pointed noses, oversize eyes, and double chins. So also the body is fashioned to a formula with no pretensions to the observance of anatomical exactitude. Often these figures give us the impression of marionettes in a puppet show, and I for one believe that they were in part derived from that age-old pastime so dear to the folk drama and folk art of India. The colouring assumes a new aspect. It is usually rich with glowing backgrounds of lacquer red, bright blue, yellow, and also gold, to act as a foil to the *dramatis personae* of the scenes, as though they were performing against a painted backdrop. The painting itself is not bereft of skill and naive charm, and the line though rapid and sketch-like is not hesitant. Each little painting is a concise statement in a pictorial script. This kind of work was not meant to be a form of high artistic achievement. It was purely a method of illustration which those for whom it was intended understood well, and it served its purpose. Those who commissioned such manuscripts were more concerned with their hieratic content and the obtaining of religious merit than with intrinsic beauty, though no doubt the richness of colouring was appreciated. The requirements of the Jain faith however sat heavily on these manuscript-illustrators, and the pictorial formula employed became so crystallized that the style became endlessly repetitive, a characteristic of hieratic art. A large number of these Jain illustrated manuscripts were commissioned by lay followers for presentation to religious preceptors who usually kept them in the Jain Bhandars. This fact accounts for the great number of such manuscripts still in existence and in a good state of preservation.

But a novel development in style took place in the middle of the fourteenth century when the text known as the *Kālakācāryakathā* came to be commonly illustrated. The story in brief is how a Jain monk Kālaka, whose sister, a Jain nun, had been ravished by the wicked king Gardhabhilla, sought the aid of the foreign Shāhī rulers, who held sway in a certain part of India, to bring about Gardhabhilla's downfall. Kālaka thus sought to avenge the wrong done to him, which was also an act of great dishonour to the Jain faith. The Shāhī king acceded to Kālaka's request and accomplished the defeat of Gardhabhilla. In the *Kālaka-kathā* illustrations, whenever the Shāhī king and his armies appear they are painted in the manner of the mongoloid figures which are to be found in the Mongol period of Persian painting of the fourteenth century. Both in face and costume these Shāhīs of the Kālaka story are obviously borrowed from Persian illustrated manuscripts, which the illustrators of the Jain texts had seen. This is not at all surprising, because in the fourteenth century Gujarat was under the rule of Muslim sultāns who were great admirers of Persian art and culture. Thus, illustrated manuscripts must occasionally have been brought to Gujarat for the libraries of the sulṭāns and the Muslim nobility. Many of these Muslim nobles were bibliophiles who admired fine calligraphy, gilding and painting. The rich Jain bankers and merchants had business contacts with the Muslim aristocracy, and occasions could easily have arisen for Indian painters to be shown the illustrations in the Persian style through the good offices of their rich Jain patrons. Moreover the intercourse with Persia led to many artistic Persian manufactures, such as carpets, embroidered textiles, painted pottery, and engraved metalware, coming into the ports of Gujarat. Such objects may also have been a source of certain Persian influences which we can discern in Jain manuscript painting. The mongoloid types were apparently thought suitable for the foreign Shāhīs and thus adopted into Jain manuscript painting. What is intriguing is that, when depicting the Shāhīs, the device of the farther projecting eye is eliminated and the farther eye remains within the outlines of the face. This Persian influence is also to be seen in certain features such as the drawing of horses and the depiction of cloud formations.

The Jain manuscript style was not confined to Gujarat. It spread to Mandu, where the work possessed certain stylistic features of its own, and also to Jaunpur. Rich Jains were living at all these centres. One feature of the style at Mandu, and even more so at Jaunpur, is that contemporary costumes are worn by some of the female and male figures. In the Gujarati manuscripts the same stereotyped costumes had remained the mode for almost four hundred years, and it could hardly be that they were indicative of the costumes worn throughout this long period of time. The style had become so divorced from contemporary life and manners that it sought no change. At Jaunpur, however, in the year A.D. 1465 an attempt is made to depict the contemporary manner in which women draped their *oḍhnīs* as a broad band across the chest, and also to illustrate the type of turban worn by male musicians and probably the Hindu men-folk in general. It is an important innovation because it indicates that the long tyranny of not departing from a set formula, even for costume, was at last coming to an end and the artist was making an effort, even if a somewhat timid one, to render some aspects of contemporary life. Though most of these miniatures are formal in subject matter and composition, a few scenes lent themselves to artistry in their rendering. One such scene is the story of the charioteer and the dancer Kosi, and the charm with which it is portrayed indicates that these manuscript illustrators did possess an aptitude for a lyrical rendering of themes if the opportunity came their way.

In about A.D. 1475, at the port of Gandhar near Broach in Gujarat, a remarkable manuscript was painted illustrating the *Kalpasūtra* and the Kālaka story. Today it is in the possession of the Devsano Bhandar at Ahmedabad. It is quite revolutionary in its style as far as its border decoration is concerned, but paradoxically it remains strictly conservative in its representation of the usual scenes pertaining to the *Kalpasūtra* text. However, in the *Kālakācārya* section of the manuscript we find that the Shāhīs of the story are no longer depicted in the manner of the Persian painting of the Mongol period, but are costumed in what was probably the fashion prevailing at the contemporary Sultanate court of Gujarat with its capital at Ahmedabad. This manuscript is thus an unusual combination, evidencing a rebellion by an imaginative artist against the deadening shackles which the Jain hierarchy had imposed on the manuscript illustrators of Gujarat for centuries. Here in these border panels we find horsemen depicted in the Timurid manner of Persian painting; the famous Bahrām Gūr of the *Shāh Nāmah* story with Āzāda, his favourite, on a camel; a seascape showing a trading vessel no doubt anchored at Gandhar Bunder where the manuscript was painted; and a pure landscape of quite extraordinary interest, which was something most unusual in Indian painting. But such departures from accepted formulas seem to have been few and far between. There is only one more manuscript of this type known, which was painted later in A.D. 1501 at Patan in Gujarat. Nevertheless, they come like a breath of fresh air to relieve the monotony into which the manuscript style had fallen. One feature of the manuscript style of the fifteenth century, however, needs to be stressed. The colouring is excessively rich, and gold is freely used, often indiscriminately so. This lavish use of gold was no doubt a requirement of the wealthy Jain patrons who had these manuscripts prepared, and it may not be fair to lay the blame for this vulgarity at the door of the illustrator. This phase of manuscript illustration in Gujarat is known as the ‘ opulent style ’. There is an extension of the Jain style in a folkish manner even as far away as Bihar in the mid-fifteenth century where Buddhist manuscript covers were painted at Ara (Arrah) in A.D. 1446. They are in the Cambridge University Library. In the fifteenth century there was a breakaway from illustrating religious texts to illustrating secular love poetry, as can be seen in a mid-fifteenth century illustrated scroll called the *Vasant Vilās*, now in the Freer Gallery, Washington. But the style remains the Gujarati idiom. So also the romance, *Laur-Chandā* (Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi), is illustrated in a somewhat similar style in Uttar Pradesh in the late fifteenth century, though here we have a departure to a vertical format and several features of stylistic interest, such as the excessively narrow waists and very small breasts of female figures, which appear to be characteristics of the Northern Indian style. Male figures wear heart-shaped turbans, and the depiction of night is effected by a dark sky with stars. The bonds which had so long frowned on innovation were loosening everywhere.

But apart from these developments, another style of painting was also making its appearance at one or may be more than one centre of sultanate rule. In the late fifteenth century, several Persian texts came to be illustrated in a hybrid style which is a combination of Persian and indigenous elements. They appear to belong to the northern belt from Delhi to Jaunpur during Lodī rule. It is not a court art but a bourgeois style to satisfy the requirements of Muslim bibliophiles who could not afford the luxury of very superior painters. Thus we find illustrations of the *Shāh Nāmah* (Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi), the *Sikandar Nāmah* (present whereabouts not known), and the *Hamzā Nāmah* (Tübingen University), in which the elements of Jain stylization and Persianized figures, who may well represent the Muslim gentry of sultanate India, form a framework for what can be referred to as a sultanate style. At Mandu in the beginning of the sixteenth century we do, however, have some indications of a sultanate court art in a manuscript called the *Nī'mat Nāmah* dealing with cookery recipes and other such matters made for Sulṭān Ghiāsu'd-dīn, who in his later life is said to have lived in a city entirely populated by womenfolk. It is now in the India Office Library. Here the style is very materially influenced by the Turkman school of Persian painting, and seems to be the work of a Persian artist at the Mandu court who had imbibed certain Indian influences and was also aided by Indian assistants.

An illustrated lexicon in a similar style was also painted at Mandu during this period: it is called the *Miftāḥ'ul-Fuzalā* and is in the British Museum. We may therefore conclude that there was a court atelier at Mandu in the early sixteenth century, even if limited to a very few artists, and that it was dominated by emigrant or visiting Persian painters who worked in the provincial style of Shiraz. Though the influence of this Mandu court art on the development of Indian miniature painting was limited, the fact that a Persian artist at Mandu had Indian assistants led to some elements of the style reappearing in the seventeenth century Rajasthani Malwa idiom. How these elements came to linger on for over a century and a half is a question that raises complex problems better reserved for a more detailed consideration than is possible in the present lectures.

Just as there was a bourgeois style for illustrating Persian texts such as the *Hamzā Nāmah* already referred to, so also there grew up a bourgeois style for illustrating Hindu and Jain texts. The *Āraṇyaka Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (Asiatic Society of Bombay) was painted in the Agra region in A.D. 1516 for a *chaudharī*, that is a village headman, of the area. Since it was definitely done in the reign of Sikandar Shāh Lodī of the last sultanate dynasty of Delhi, before the advent of the Mughals, it gives us a clear idea of the Hindu bourgeois style during the Lodī period. The work is somewhat crude, but the cliché of the farther projecting eye has been abandoned save for certain Hindu deities. Facial styles, though derived from the Jain manuscript illustrations, are not so exaggerated and the costumes worn both by men and women are the contemporary costumes of the Lodī period. Another manuscript in this style is dated A.D. 1540 and was painted at Palam, where the present airport of Delhi is situated. It illustrates a Digambara Jain epic called the *Mahā Purāṇa* (Jain Atiśaya Kshetra, Jaipur). Along with the earlier *Āraṇyaka Parvan* it introduces an innovation in style, namely a desire to illustrate, whenever the context afforded an opportunity, simple scenes of everyday life such as ploughing, drawing water from a well, milking a cow and so forth.

We might truly say that now, at this stage, the hitherto frozen styles of manuscript illustration in India were in the melting-pot of change. A variety of manuscripts belong to this period of change when artists began to be concerned as much with the illustration of romances as they had been with the illustration of religious texts. The production varies from highly competent painting, such as is seen in the romance, *Laur-Chandā*, of the Prince of Wales Museum (Bombay), which has many of the graces of a court art and marked Persian influence of the Turkman school, to more emotional productions which illustrate love poems in the manner of the famous *Chaurapañchāśika* series (Ahmedabad Museum). In similar mood are the *Gītā Govinda* of the Prince of Wales Museum, and the Kṛṣṇa legend in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (dispersed in various collections) which there is reason to think was also painted at Palam. In such manuscripts the Persian influence is not discernible. They are essentially Hindu in feeling, content, and methods of presentation. In a glow of rich colour, intense facial expressions, and a medley of naive compositional arrangements, they capture the heart throbs of Sanskrit poetry or of the *Bhāgavata* story, as the case may be. To this group, but in a folkish manner, belongs the romance of *Mirgāvat* in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, which was most probably painted in the Jaunpur area of Uttar Pradesh. Thus it would seem that the whole group of Hindu manuscripts in the bourgeois Lodī style were painted in the northern belt from Delhi to Jaunpur, and are the work of Kayastha artists who flourished in that area. Sometimes this group of illustrated manuscripts in the Lodī style is known as the *Kulāhdār* group, because the male figures depicted therein are often seen wearing the Afghan style turban with *kulāh*, which seems to have been a popular headgear worn not only by the Afghan rulers but also by their Muslim and Hindu subjects in Northern India. This group seems to span the period from the early sixteenth century to as late as A.D. 1575. The style thus continued into the Mughal period though Lodī rule ended in A.D. 1526. This is because the Mughal School itself is a creation of Akbar's reign after about A.D. 1563, and hence it is not surprising that the Lodī style should have continued in vogue for a considerable period of time until completely supplanted by the momentous changes which followed the birth of the Mughal School.

Of the court style of the Lodīs we know nothing, and it seems not unlikely that painting was neither regularly nor extensively patronized at sultanate courts. Strangely enough, neither Abu'l-Fazl nor any of the other chronicles of Bābur's, Humāyūn's and Akbar's times mention anything about a school of sultanate painting or a sultanate court atelier. The pre-Mughal style of the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries with which I have been dealing is significant for the fact that it monitored a departure from the style of Gujarati painting, though originally it stemmed from and was influenced by the latter. It also widened the horizon of achievement for Indian painters by opening up a new vista which led to the illustration of romances, stories, poems, and other secular literature. The cobwebs of unimaginative hieratic production in the Gujarati style illustrations of the Jain canon were slowly being swept away and style in Indian painting was once more on the march, seeking new forms of expression which were soon to come to fuller fruition with the advent of Mughal Painting.

3

The Mughal School and its Ramifications

In A.D. 1526 Bābur (A.D. 1526–1530), a proud descendant of the great Timūr, invaded India and defeated Ibrāhīm Lodī on the field of Panipat—that battle-ground of India's destinies. The coming of the Mughals was not only a momentous happening in our history, but also a decisive factor in the development of Indian miniature painting. Bābur, however, was too preoccupied with conquests to patronize painters. But the Mughals possessed a high degree of culture, and the famous miniature book illustrations of Persia, under Sulṭān Baisunqur and later under Sulṭān Ḥusain Mirzā Baiqara at

Herat, were well known to Bābur and his court; for the Mughals were always admirers of fine manuscript production and calligraphy. When Humāyūn came to the throne in A.D. 1530, he was heir to a troubled kingdom which he was not strong enough to consolidate and his vain efforts to achieve military success afforded him no leisure to patronise art. In A.D. 1540 he was driven into exile by the Afghan, Sher Shāh, and it was not till A.D. 1555 that he regained his throne, only to die within a year of his success. But while in exile in Persia, he had seen the magnificent atelier of the Safavid ruler, Shāh Tahmāsp, and on his return to India he brought with him two Safavid artists, Mīr Saiyid 'Alī and 'Abdu'ṣ-Ṣamad. But Humāyūn died before he could think of founding an atelier, assuming that such was his objective in bringing the two Persian masters to this country, which is doubtful. He does not appear to have had the vision of his son Akbar. According to the *Tārīkh-i-Humāyūn* of Bāyazīd Bīyāt, Humayun had a small atelier of artists at Kabul when he was in exile, two of whom, so far as we know, accompanied him to India. But if this account is authentic, it suggests that admiration for technical skill, such as painting a picture on a grain of rice, rather outweighed the appreciation of more adequate forms of miniature art.

Akbar came to the throne in A.D. 1556 as a mere boy of twelve, and accordingly it could only be at a later date that he conceived the idea of an atelier of artists, and also a spectacular extension of the royal library with beautifully produced manuscripts, many of which were to be illustrated. This must have happened near about A.D. 1563, when he had begun to assert himself in every sphere of activity displaying his remarkable capacity to carry out every project he planned on an ambitious scale. By A.D. 1567 he had established a considerable atelier of Indian artists working under the two Persian masters, and had put into commission the grandiose design of illustrating the *Hamzā Nāmah* in 14 volumes, each containing a hundred paintings of large size on cloth. It proved to be a unique undertaking and was the crucible in which the innate talent of indigenous artists was developed and refined. Though the Indian artists soon accustomed themselves to the training and methods of their Persian mentors, their inborn love of bright glowing colours began to dominate their palette. They also introduced certain compositional features with which they were familiar but which were foreign to Persian book illustration. Here was something bolder and more vigorous than Persian painting had ever been, and it is not too much to say that a new style was in the making.

There is reason to think that the unorthodox treatment seen in many of the folios of the *Hamzā Nāmah* received the support of Abdu'ṣ-Ṣamad who appears to have been the creator of several of the bizarre characters who inhabit the pages of the weird *Hamzā* romance. He was not only a miniaturist but also a mural painter, and probably realized that the outsize format of the *Hamzā* folios needed a different approach from that which constituted the highly sophisticated Persian style of book illustration. That the Emperor himself encouraged such an outlook can be gathered from certain observations in the *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī* of Abu'l-

Fazl, the faithful biographer of Akbar. But to the conservative Mīr Saiyid 'Alī, an artist of exceptional talent nurtured in the strictest tenets of Safavid painting, the new dispensation may well have been a cause of some bewilderment. Though he supervised the *Hamzā* project till A.D. 1574, up to which date only four volumes were produced, he thereafter went to Mecca and never returned. On Mīr Saiyid 'Alī's departure, Abdu'ṣ-Ṣamad became the head of the royal atelier, and the remaining volumes of the *Hamzā* series were completed under his sole supervision by A.D. 1582. It had taken fifteen years to accomplish the undertaking but the importance of the experiment on the future course of Indian painting was indeed inestimable. It must not be thought, however, that throughout the period of fifteen years the energies of the atelier were solely devoted to the *Hamzā* project. Several other manuscripts were also illustrated, of great delicacy and refinement, in contrast to the brilliant yet often strident paintings of the *Hamzā Nāmah*. The debt of Mughal painting to the two Persian masters is great indeed, even if they appear to have trodden rather differing paths of artistic endeavour.

Though it must remain a matter of conjecture, yet what probably happened was that Mīr Saiyid 'Alī gathered around him the most skilled artists in the atelier and drilled them successfully to achieve, at least in considerable measure, that excellence of workmanship and subtlety of colour and drawing which had characterized Persian painting since the days of the great Bihzād. What Mīr Saiyid 'Alī achieved may be seen in the two miniatures of the *Dewal Rānī Khizr Khān* manuscript dated A.D. 1568 (in the National Museum, New Delhi), and in the *Anwār-i-Suhailī* dated A.D. 1570 (in the School of Oriental and African Studies, London). It is not unlikely that his own hand has composed, drawn and coloured passages in the miniatures of both these manuscripts.

Thus there were two differing trends of style at the outset in Akbar's atelier, namely the *Hamzā* style seen also in the Rampur Raza Library's *Tilasm* manuscript, and that fostered by Mīr Saiyid 'Alī. Akbar could neither read nor write, at least with any proficiency. But he had a genuine thirst for knowledge though he himself was unlearned. He accordingly commissioned many manuscripts to be illustrated and his catholic mind was not content to have only Persian texts beautified. Thus he was keen to be acquainted with the writings of the Hindus, and had the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyana*, the *Nala-Damayantī* story, the *Harivaṁśa*, the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*, and several other such works translated into Persian and embellished with paintings. Many of these have not survived, though once they formed part of his imperial library which had more than twenty-five thousand splendid volumes, a number of which were illustrated by his court painters. We have however an idea of the sumptuousness of such volumes from those still existing in various collections and museums.

The imperial copies of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* in later days found their way into the library of the Kacchawa rulers of Jaipur, not by way of gift from the Mughal Emperor Muḥammad Shāh (A.D. 1719–1748) as has been erroneously stated, but by purchase, though in what circumstances is not known. They are now in the possession of the mahārājās of Jaipur, and some folios used to be displayed in the city-palace museum till a recent theft in the palace led to their removal for safety. It is much to be hoped that these manuscripts will be displayed again in the near future and be available for study. I had an opportunity of examining them many years ago due to the kind offices of the then Resident, but for the most part they have been insufficiently studied and inadequately reproduced.

Though those who are familiar with stylistic developments can immediately recognize the marked influence of Persian painting on the Hindu texts illustrated in Akbar's atelier, they are no mere imitations of the Persian manner. The school developed distinctive features of its own, not only in colour tonality but also in composition and characterization of the personages depicted. In contrast, the indigenous artists of the pre-Mughal period had never been concerned with portraiture as such or even with characterization. All faces, male and female, as we observed in the last lecture, were stylized and painted more or less to a pattern. But now, under the guidance of the Persian masters, the Indian artists began to develop an understanding of portraiture and a keen sense of characterization which they finally carried to a level of achievement rarely seen even in Persian painting. Not only are a variety of types, all obviously derived from real life, to be seen in the painted folios of the incidents, stories and romances which they illustrated, but a brilliant school of individual portraiture also began to be developed. Here again it was the enthusiasm of Akbar that was responsible for the growth of the Mughal portrait style. He had many albums prepared containing likenesses of the grandees and nobles of his realm. The effect of a school of portraiture on the painting of the *dramatis personae* in stories and romances is to be seen in the development of a style, to fulfil the needs of which it became essential to carefully observe and make sketch-book notes of suitable models for all the diverse participants who appeared in any particular composition. If we pause to think of the unending series of portrait studies in later times of the Rajput rājās and nobles of Rajasthan and of the Punjab hill states, we cannot but conclude that it was Mughal painting under Akbar that had sown the seeds of the art of portraiture in India, at least in late mediaeval times. Prior to the advent of the Mughals the only attempt at genuine portraiture which is to be found in Indian painting is at Ajanta, where on occasion it seems fairly certain that some of the personages in the *Jātaka* and other stories were carefully memorized studies from life. The illustration of Hindu texts involving the rendering of Hindu gods, Hindu warriors, and Hindu themes, had quite a significant influence on the Mughal style and created norms which not only endured but which later on influenced other schools of painting, such as the Rajasthani *Qalam* which grew up to no inconsiderable extent under the aegis of Mughal art.

The initial impact of Persian painting on the Indian artists in Akbar's atelier led to the development of sound draughtsmanship, though it lacked the delicate rhythm of Persian line drawing. A great tradition of draughtsmanship had existed at Ajanta; though, in mediaeval manuscript illustrations, *line* tended to be either somewhat brusque as in the Jain Gujarati style manuscripts, or docile, when not cloying, as in the illustrations of the Buddhist texts painted in Bengal under the Pālas and later in Nepal. So also, the Indian artists' invariable appetite for brilliant colouring was somewhat controlled in the process of tutelage, though it had repeatedly asserted itself in many folios of the *Hamzā Nāmah* and the *Tilasm* illustrations of the Raza library. But as time passed, the Indian artists were more and more disciplined into ever increasing skills and refinements in every department of book illustration. The most significant feature of this process was that by degrees the Indian artist became a true miniaturist, in the sense in which we apply that term to the miniature painting of Persia. This transformation had far-reaching consequences on the development of style. It may be remembered that the production of the pre-Mughal period, though often naive and attractive, never had pretentions to a high degree of skill, exquisiteness of colouring, or delicacy of drawing—qualities which are the *sine qua non* of miniature painting of excellence. The process of training the Indian artists went on for well over a period of thirty years, as new entrants were drafted into the atelier. But it must not be thought that all the artists continued to remain in a state of pupilage. Some even equalled the attainments of their mentors, but there is no doubt it was always a Persian artist who remained at the head of Akbar's atelier and was always the deciding factor on matters pertaining to training, production, and the standards to be achieved. It is true we find the highest praise in the pages of Abu'l-Fazl for the leading Indian artists of the imperial studio, but none the less there is no mistaking the fact that the work of the royal studio, throughout the reign of Akbar in any event, was controlled first by Mīr Saiyid 'Alī, and on his departure to Mecca by Abdu'ṣ-Ṣamad who in A.D. 1586 was given another assignment. Thereafter it seems that Farrukh Beg the Qalmaq, an exceptionally talented artist who had entered Akbar's service in A.D. 1585, became the head of the atelier. It is my belief that he played a role of prime importance in developing the standard of miniature painting during Akbar's reign. This fact has not been adequately appreciated by most writers on Mughal painting, though the famous collector, the late A. C. Ardeshir, was quick to recognise it and never doubted that Farrukh Beg was the head of the atelier when Abdu'ṣ-Ṣamad was assigned to another office. It has been suggested that the Indian artist, Basawān, was the head of the atelier after Mīr Saiyid 'Alī and Abdu'ṣ-Ṣamad. This, however, is improbable in the very nature of things at that period of time and at that stage of development. Moreover Mīr Saiyid 'Alī was a poet and littérateur and Abdu'ṣ-Ṣamad rose to be the master of Akbar's mint, and Farrukh Beg by his very antecedents was also a man of culture. On the other hand it would seem that the Indian artists were men of no status as compared to the Persian artists, though undoubtedly of talent. For instance, Daswanth, on whom great praise is bestowed by Abu'l Fazl, though nothing of his exists to justify such high encomiums, was the son of a *kahar*, which means a man who does menial work. Farrukh Beg painted a self-portrait at the age of seventy, as the inscription thereupon informs us. This miniature was in the Ardeshir collection when I last examined it. It would suggest that Farrukh Beg remained the head of the imperial atelier at least till Akbar's death in A.D. 1605. If ever he went to reside in the Deccan, as has been suggested though without any tangible evidence, it is improbable that it could have been before that date. There was no other Persian artist who could have been the head of the atelier between A.D. 1586 and A.D. 1605, and it is unlikely that the atelier was left to function without a Persian mentor. The influence of Persian master artists on the style of Akbar's atelier is apparent throughout his reign.

It was once fashionable to talk of the Mughal school as 'Indo-Persian'. Even if that term could justifiably have application to some of the earlier work of Akbar's reign, the style as it developed in later years cannot be thus designated. By then it had attained a method of presentation and a technique all its own, though the foundations of the style undoubtedly rested on Persian painting. In the most finished work of the Akbar period, the indigenous tradition of pre-Mughal painting which exercised some influence in the earlier stages is altogether absent. In the fullness of its development it is a realistic style of great competence though still adhering to aerial perspective and the narrative method which combines to give it a charm of its own. The colouring is kaleidoscopic; the picture space is crowded with incidents; the technique is of the highest order, and the composition is held together even if the narration is not logical in time and space. I have no difficulty in understanding the viewpoint of those critics who feel that Mughal painting reached its greatest heights under Akbar, though it has long been a tendency to think that the summit was in the reign of Jehāngīr and in the early part of the reign of Shāh Jehān, the builder of the Tāj. Perhaps the supreme achievement of the late Akbari school is the great illustrated *Akbar Nāmah*, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, which illustrates incidents in the life of Akbar. But many other splendid manuscripts in that style were also painted. The illustrations of the *Bābur Nāmah*, of which there are several fine copies, deal with incidents from the life of Bābur, though painted towards the close of the 16th century A.D. A splendid *Bābur Nāmah* is now in the National Museum, New Delhi, and was purchased from the library of St John's College, Agra. Here we see a court art. It deals with the lives and pleasures of the mighty, and yet pictorially such subject matter can be highly attractive. True, it does not arouse our deeper emotions, but its merit lies in exquisitness of presentation.

Another type of painting much favoured in the Akbar period was the illustration of the bird and animal fables known as the *Anwār-i-Suhailī*. In keeping with the naturalistic approach of Mughal painting, each individual bird and animal in such illustrations is painted with considerable exactitude and quite often with the feeling of a naturalist for the life of the forest. In this context it is of particular interest to note how, at times, the subject matter of a painting unobtrusively but surely influences stylistic developments.

The works of the Persian poets were also much favoured for illustration as had been the practice in Persia. And thus we find the *Diwān* of Ḥāfiz, the poems of Nizāmī, the *Haft-Aurang* of Jāmī, and several other well known literary masterpieces written in beautiful calligraphy on tastefully decorated and gilded pages and accompanied by several illustrations which enhance the beauty of the manuscript. Here we have a composite art. The art of high quality manuscript production in which all its three components, namely calligraphy, gilding and decoration, and painting, are coordinated into a most satisfying result, richly endowed with all the skill of human hands—a bibliophile's dream of book production fulfilled. Naturally, the accomplishment of such undertakings could only be for those who were cultured and affluent, and hence this form of art is aristocratic in every sense of the term. It is not the art of the people, nor for the people. It belongs to the realm of great courts and establishments of great nobles. Its background is an atmosphere of refinement, learning and cultured pursuits. Its inspiration is not the tumult of the heart but a desire to satisfy a certain form of intellectual craving, in which the sheer visual enjoyment of such a work of art becomes to a man of letters and taste an end in itself. The requirements of a style of painting suitable to such book production laid emphasis on the finest brushwork, the utmost refinement of colouring, naturalism of a certain order, and the elimination of all folkish or bourgeois elements.

Though the dominant influence on Mughal painting was the Persian school, we also have to recognize the debt which the growth of the Mughal style owed to European painting. Akbar's well known contacts with the Jesuit and other Christian missions led to European pictures, such as illustrations to the Bible in the form of engravings, becoming popular with the Emperor. Apart from the copies which were made of such pictures by the Mughal court artists, they opened the way for new ideas such as aerial perspective, modelling of garments, shading in a variety of forms, and background landscapes. The so-called Christian pictures of the Mughal school are not themselves as vital for the purpose of judging the influence of European painting on Mughal art as the technical ideas which were derived from European engravings and paintings seen by the Mughal court artists. It requires rather careful analysis to appreciate the full extent of this influence, but I regard it as much greater than is usually acknowledged. At times it is fairly obvious, but often it is subtle yet distinctive in creating certain stylistic trends.

We may well ask ourselves how a style bred in aristocratic seclusion could have had any influence on the mainstream of development in Indian painting? The answer is not far to seek. In a large atelier such as that maintained by Akbar, there were many grades of artists. In fact, Abu'l-Fazl remarks that in addition to the great masters there were numerous other artists of competence.

Now every artist in the royal studio could not have remained in service permanently. For diverse reasons, artists who had once worked in the imperial atelier had returned to their homes or taken employment elsewhere. We know, for instance, that even the great grandees of the realm, such as 'Abdu'r-Rahīm the Khān-Khānān, maintained artists in their employ. Some of the novitiates in the imperial atelier may not have made the exacting grade necessary for advancement, but having acquired a certain amount of experience and training were reasonably well fitted to paint for those whose requirements were not of the high standard essential for the output of the royal studio. Some, again, may have aged in the Emperor's service and retired, but nevertheless continued to impart their art to their pupils. In the manner of the mediaeval Italian workshops, every Indian craftsman of some status in the practice of his craft, even though his renown was only local, had pupils whom he trained to carry on his professional avocation. Thus it was that the manner of painting patronised by the Mughal court spread beyond its confines and reached many other artists to whom it came as a new experience. The immediate result of this process, which spread the knowledge and practice of Mughal painting beyond the confines of the court, was an awakening to the need of a superior technique in drawing and colouring, and a realization that overstylised forms and outdated mannerisms such as the farther projecting eye must be abandoned. The desirability of depicting the *dramatis personae* of the paintings in contemporary costumes was also recognized, as well as the necessity for a greater degree of naturalism in the treatment of subject matter. Of course, the transformation could not be effected overnight, but at the same time it was not long in coming. It may be observed that any change of style in Indian painting had always been a slow process. The Gujarati manuscript illustrations had for centuries remained stereotyped and Persian influences, such as are discernible, had only been accepted for a few limited purposes and motifs. The mainstream of Gujarati painting adhered to its hieratic formulas. So also in the Lodī school the absorption of occasional Persian influence was a tardy process and no far-reaching changes were effected, though the stranglehold of Gujarati painting on which the Lodī style was originally based had somewhat loosened. But with the advent of Mughal painting it was as though a miracle had been wrought, for in less than three decades from the establishment of Akbar's atelier a new outlook had come into being and the foundations of the Rajasthani School were laid. By A.D. 1605 it was plain to see how Mughal painting was giving a new direction to the indigenous schools.

The spread of the Mughal style into less exalted strata of society created a demand for illustrated manuscripts in the Mughal manner. The new clientele was no longer prepared to be satisfied with the antiquated formulas of Gujarati painting, nor with the productions of the bourgeois Lodī style. Though this new clientele could not expect from the artists who were at its disposal that superior quality of work which was to be seen in the royal studios, it was none the less conscious that the old dispensations had become outdated and that a more acceptable style was necessary. The style of this form of painting, which was derived from the court art of the Mughals, is usually referred to as the Popular Mughal School. I am aware that like most other new nomenclatures it has its shortcomings. Yet it serves its purpose and, since the publication of the Khajanchi catalogue by the lecturer and his associates, it has gone into current usage. The Popular Mughal School came into vogue from as early as *circa* A.D. 1595. This can now be accepted as a reasonably correct date for its commencement, since in recent years I have found two manuscripts, namely, a *Mādhavanala Kāmakandala* (dispersed) dated A.D. 1603, and a *Rāgamālā* series (dispersed) dated A.D. 1605. On the basis of these manuscripts, the well known example of the Popular Mughal Style, namely a *Gīta Govinda* folio in the collection of the late Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Bart., of Bombay, can be ascribed to A.D. 1595. Many illustrated manuscripts in the style were commissioned such as the *Gīta Govinda*, *Nala-Damayantī*, *Mādhavanala Kāmakandala*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as well as paintings illustrating the *Rāgamālā* and other themes. The influence of Mughal painting is unmistakably present, but the subject matter, chosen largely from Hindu literary sources, gives this form of production a characteristic Indian flavour. Though the refinements of Akbar's atelier in the matter of colour tonality are often lacking and though this output can rarely compare in excellence of technique with the work of the royal artists, still the miniatures of the Popular Mughal School are lively and attractive and prepare us for the new developments in style which were shortly to take place and which I will deal with presently.

But before I do so, it is necessary to indicate the progress of the Mughal style in the reign of Akbar's son Jehāngīr who ruled from A.D. 1605 to 1628. He had inherited his father's love for painting and even as Prince Salīm he had artists in his employ. When he came to the throne he also maintained an atelier of splendid artists, including several who had worked for his father. In this period the bias in favour of book illustration was not so marked as it had been in the reign of Akbar, though several fine manuscripts with illustrations continued to be produced. The vogue for individual pictures is evident, and important developments were made in the art of portraiture and in bird and animal studies. In some ways the work of Jehāngīr's reign is the climax of Mughal painting. Individual miniatures also came to be artistically mounted with beautifully decorated borders and the royal albums thus formed cannot but evoke a feeling that here we have a court art *par excellence*. Characterization in portraiture reached an exceedingly high standard in the hands of Jehāngīr's artists, and the penetrating analysis of these Indian Holbeins, as they have been referred to, brought a new element into the style of Mughal portrait painting. So also the bird and animal studies of the period are a joy to behold. Jehāngīr had an inquiring mind, and whenever rare birds and animals were presented to him he commissioned his artists to make studies of them. Many other feathered and four-footed denizens of the forest were also painted as well as favourite elephants, antelopes, and falcons. Though Jehāngīr's objective was mainly to maintain a record of things that interested him, yet in the hands of his artists such studies far transcended the outlook of a naturalist and the splendid Mughal bird and animal style came to be evolved. Unfortunately it was of short duration, and its indefinable beauty waned in later reigns. The emperor evinced the same interest in flower studies, though few have survived. Jehāngīr has written the most delightful memoirs, known as the *Tūzuk-i-Jehāngīrī*, and there was once an illustrated copy of the work made for the royal library. But very little of it exists today. A few splendid folios are in the Raza library, Rampur. It was an elaborate production containing impressive court scenes and the depiction of incidents during Jehāngīr's travels in various parts of his realm. This resplendent form of court art continued in the reign of Shāh Jehān but with increasing rigidity. In contrast, however, paintings of dervishes, and visits of princes and royal and aristocratic ladies to saints acquired a vogue and are to be commonly seen. Such scenes are at times charged with subdued emotion, though the style of Mughal painting as a whole is bereft of emotional content. A new technique, namely, of drawings lightly tinted here and there with washes of colour and gold, also appears to have been favoured in this reign and is known as the *Siyāhī Qalam*. This technique laid a premium on line work of delicate quality.

With the accession to the throne of the bigoted Aurangzīb, who frowned on music and even on certain types of painting, the work of the imperial atelier suffered for want of interest and sufficient patronage. But the decline in output was not so great as is usually imagined and some splendid portraits belong to his reign. Nevertheless, the partial neglect resulted in a considerable movement of painters to provincial centres and to the courts of the Rajput chiefs of Rajasthan. At the end of Aurangzīb's reign the reaction to his puritanical rule led to a style of painting which delighted in the depiction of love scenes, music and dance parties, displays of fireworks and *zenānā* pastimes. The quality of painting was not lacking in merit but its subject matter became effete. It reflected a decadent court given to pleasure, while the reins of government slipped into the unscruplous hands of flatterers and low born upstarts. This style continued into the reign of Shāh 'Ālam II, A.D. 1759–1806. A technical device of this period is the pronounced shading of faces by means of a stippling technique of minute dark dots against pinkish complexions. The Shāh 'Ālam period style was a peculiar mixture in which imitation of the work of earlier reigns mingled with unpleasant clichés, such as squat figures with heads too large for the body. This is particularly to be seen in the portrayal of figures of attendants and followers of inferior status, so as to emphasize that circumstance. This convention, in the period to which it belongs, was no doubt thought to be very appropriate, but in truth it is symptomatic of degenerate tendencies. The glory of Mughal painting was over. In its heyday it was largely responsible for the creation of a new outlook in Indian painting, vast improvements in drawing and brushwork, an entire new range of colour tonalities and a newly found interest in portraiture.

Mughal painting also gave rise to the growth of what are termed provincial Mughal schools. They derived their style from the Mughal school but in addition developed certain local characteristics. Such provincial schools existed at Lucknow, Faizabad, Murshidabad, Hyderabad, and several other centres: the quality of work varies greatly. In the Northern Indian centres and at Murshidabad it savours of Nawabi decadence, while in the Deccan it retains more vitality. The style adapts itself to the subject matter which is normally the depiction of pleasurable pursuits in one form or another. Of most of this work one can say little more than that it is pleasing and displays practised craftsmanship.

But there is one phase of painting in the Deccan which has carved out a niche for itself both for its excellence and its uniqueness so far as the development of style in Indian painting is concerned. This style appears to range from about A D. 1570 to A.D. 1630, and its main centres were Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmadnagar, all Deccanī Sultanate succession states which rose to power on the decline of the Bahmanī dynasty. The belief that an illustrated manuscript on erotics painted at Bidar belongs to the mid-16th century is based on a misinterpretation of the colophon. It can be no earlier than the first decade of the 17th century even on grounds of style. It is in the Salar Jung Museum. This early Deccan style is not an offshoot of Mughal art. It is a most delightful growth out of Persian, Turkish and Vijayanagar influences, creating an idiom of its own. The Vijayanagar elements give this style an exotic charm while the Persian elements bring in rhythm and grace. It can also boast of a school of impressive portraiture. But by degrees the Mughal influence begins to pervade the art of the Deccan. The Laud *Rāgamālā* in the Bodleian Library at Oxford is really a product of the Deccan, but the strong Mughal influence has led some critics to think it is not Deccani. This is understandable even if fallacious. Nevertheless, even late Deccanī painting usually has certain characteristics which serve to distinguish it from Mughal painting both in colouring and composition. But apart from the creation of provincial schools, a circumstance of even greater import is that at each stage Mughal painting exercised no mean influence on the two great schools of indigenous painting, namely the Rajasthani *Qalam* and the Pahari *Qalam* which, so to say, were nurtured under its wing. So also, it provided the basis on which the provincial Mughal schools, the most important of which was in the Deccan, flourished.

I am aware of the sharp controversy on the question of the influence of Mughal painting on the Rajasthani and Pahari schools, but I have never had a moment's doubt that but for the advent of Mughal painting, the Rajasthani and Pahari schools would not have blossomed forth with that undeniable beauty which they possess in large measure. In the painting of the pre-Mughal period there are influences derived from Persian miniatures to be discerned, but by far and large we may say that the indigenous painter of that period only nibbled at Persian painting. It never revolutionized his approach or his output. But with Mughal painting it was a different story. Its influence rapidly brought about a change not only in the standards of the artists themselves but created new standards of appreciation in the minds of those who patronized the work of the indigenous painters. It is significant that when the Jain community at Agra wanted to send a *vijñāptipatra*, that is an invitation scroll-letter, to a Jain *muni* whose presence it desired at Agra, the commission for the painted scenes in the scroll was not given to any painter, who worked in the old Gujarati style. On the contrary the services of an artist named Salhivahana, who had once worked in the imperial atelier, were commissioned and he was entrusted with the task of painting the fine illustrations which appear in the invitation letter. It was formerly in the Jain Bhandar at Patan, but is now to be seen in the L.D. Institute at Ahmedabad.

Akbar, as is well known, believed in a very conciliatory attitude towards the Rajput states and even married Rajput princesses. Rajput princes and nobles in Akbar's entourage began to take an interest in painting because of the presence of so many artists at the court. This interest may have been due to the fact that the maintenance of an atelier came to be regarded as a prestige symbol. Nevertheless, it led the Rajput chiefs to employ such painters of ability as were available to them at their own courts. Thus, schools of painting grew up in Mewar, Bundi, Marwar, Bikaner and other Rajput states, not only in Rajasthan but also in Central India. But these schools for the most part were not content to be mere imitations of Mughal painting. The tastes of the romantic and warlike Rajput chieftains were obviously rather different from those of the Persianized Mughals, and this is reflected in the art of painting which grew up in Rajasthan. Being also a court art like that of the Mughals, it delighted in royal portraits including equestrian studies, hunting scenes, and other such activities. In addition, literary works came to be extensively illustrated right from A.D. 1605, in which year we have a *Rāgamālā* series painted at Chawand where the famous Pratāp Singh of Mewar had his capital while defying the Mughal armies from his mountain fastnesses. In most Rajasthani schools of painting the palette is brilliant and gay, and the persons who inhabit these paintings are dressed in the contemporary manner. Though there is much borrowing from Mughal painting, these new idioms, which we group under the general nomenclature of Rajasthani School, have a marked individuality of their own. Their departures from the Mughal style seem to have been deliberate, being conditioned by the mental attitude of the artists as well as of their patrons. Rajasthani painting is thus a bold experiment in style. It takes what it thinks is necessary from Mughal painting, but does not surrender the indigenous idioms altogether. This is true of every Rajasthani school, though Bikaner is closest to Mughal painting in spirit and content. As Douglas Barrett has so aptly remarked, ' Bikaner painting only just escapes being Mughal'.

But the schools of Mewar, Bundi, Marwar, Malwa, Kisangarh etc., are all highly individualistic in style. Just as the Rajput chiefs accepted the Mughal supremacy but never surrendered their way of life or their manner of thinking, so also Rajput art never surrendered its spirit to Mughal painting, though it owed much to the latter. There has been considerable controversy on the origins of the Rajasthani school. The origins are thought by some writers to be in pre-Mughal painting, such as the style which I have termed the Lodī School, and in Persianized manuscripts from Mandu, such as the *Nī'mat Nāmah*. But this is only a half-truth. Some influence from such sources may have crept into Rajasthani painting, but its real growth is due to the influence of Mughal painting both on the Gujarati style and on the Lodī style. It must never be forgotten that but for the appearance of Mughal painting on the scene, the transformation which we term as Rajasthani painting would, I believe, have never taken place. Being a courtly art like Mughal painting, almost every small *ṭhikhānā* (feudal estate) of the feudal Rajput aristocracy maintained an atelier of artists however small. There was much self-glorification in an abundance of portraits and scenes where the rājās or *ṭhākkars*, as the feudal lords were called, were the principal personages depicted. At the same time, the Hindu spirit which loved the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Pañcatantra*, the works of the *Braj Bhāṣā* poets, such as the blind Surdās, Keśavadās and Bihārī Lāl, and the *Rāgamālā* and the *Bārāmāsa* and the *nāyaka-nāyikābheda* classifications, surged to the surface in this new revival, and many a Rajasthani series is devoted to such subjects.

In this connection, it must also be remembered that a new emotional complex had entered into the lives of millions of Hindus in this country. I mean the great Vaiṣṇava revival in thought, prayer, song, poetry, music, dance and painting, where the central figures were Kṛṣṇa, the blue cowherd god, and his earthly lover, the milkmaid Rādhā. Mughal painting was brilliant in its perfection and characterization, but it was impersonal; on the other hand, Rajasthani painting pulsated with the thrill of a new discovery in content and colour. It is not the purport of these lectures to analyse the idioms of the Rajasthani schools, each of which developed its own mannerisms, but broadly speaking they all converged towards the same ideals of pictorial representation. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are the supreme lovers in all Rajasthani schools, the patient *nāyikās* are ever the models of womanly tolerance towards male infidelity, and the seasons convey the same message of love be it springtime, the rains, or summer. These paintings reflect the traditions of these warrior chiefs, their romantic temperament and their appetite for all the pleasures of life. There is an old Rajasthani doggerel in which it is said of a Rajput chief that his war horse was his first love, his hunting dog his second love, and his mistress his third love! I have no doubt the Rajput aristocrats at the Mughal court could admire Mughal painting, but it was not close to their hearts. They needed something that throbbed with glowing colour and told of their way of life and recounted the tales and ballads that were dear to them. Technically, Rajasthani painting, though it makes no conscious effort to emulate the perfections of Mughal art, is competent and visually satisfying.

Another development of style which was evolved can also be traced to the influence of Mughal painting. It is the flowering of the Pahari schools, namely the painting of the hill states of the Punjab and Garhwal. It seems that during the reign of Aurangzīb there must have been some unemployment amongst artists at the capital city of Delhi, and such of them as could not be absorbed in the court atelier or with the armed camp of Aurangzīb in the Deccan sought service with the nobility and also with the rājās of Rajasthan. A few may have migrated to the courts of the chiefs of the Punjab hill states. These hill chieftains were also Rajputs, and from the time of Akbar some of them had come into contact with the Mughal court. In fact, like the rājās of Rajasthan, they had adopted the changing fashions of costume at the Mughal capital, and their fort palaces and other buildings had been influenced by contemporary Mughal architecture. When it became the vogue for rājās and nobles to maintain a few artists in their employ, some of the hill rājās and *miyāns* followed suit. In the beginning we find what is called the Basohli style of painting as a norm all over these hill states. It is an archaic yet brilliant style, with narrow cloud flecked horizons at the top of the picture space and glowing backgrounds of red, yellow, blue, green, orange and so forth. The figures set against expanses of vivid colour are possessed of an almost savage vitality as they dominate the scene in essentially simple compositions. How exactly this style came into being is still not clear, but we find it fully developed when it made its appearance on the scene of Indian painting. That certain influences from Mughal painting are present cannot be doubted, but it has more in common with the spirit of Rajasthani art. Did some painters from Rajasthan take service with the hill rājās and under local influences evolve a new manner of expression? Or were there indigenous painters in the hill states, who already painted in a primitive style, and were influenced by both Mughal art and the art of Rajasthan to develop a style of their own which we for reasons of convenience refer to as Basohli painting, though it may not have originated in the hill state of Basohli itself? Or could it be that Nepalese painting was the source of the mannerisms of Basohli art? All these are difficult questions to answer. For the time being we have to remain content with the conclusion that the Basohli style was a new development of the second half of the 17th century, peculiar to the hill states.

This style continued in full vigour till about A.D. 1750. But in the meantime political events in northern India brought about more migrations of artists from the imperial capital cities to the hill states where life was more secure. The invasions of India by Nādir Shāh of Persia and the repeated onslaughts of the Afghan, Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī, had created very unsettled conditions and many artists and artisans, amongst others, sought a more peaceful existence in the hills. These artists appear to have brought with them a manner of painting which prevailed at the Mughal court of Muḥammad Shāh (A.D. 1720–1748) during that period, and this new influence began slowly to displace the Basohli style which had hitherto been prevalent.

This new style is known as pre-Kangra, because it was the prelude to what is known as the Kangra style, which became so popular in all the hill states that it almost entirely replaced the Basohli idiom. The pre-Kangra style flourished from about A.D. 1740 to about 1765. It is largely associated with the family of an artist named Paṇḍit Seu. This family made its home at Guler, but whether the family was of Guler origin or not is debatable. The members of the family not only worked at the Guler court but also spread out to other hill states. Though greatly influenced by the Mughal style of the Muḥammad Shāh period, the pre-Kangra *Qalam* developed characteristics of its own. The atmosphere and scenery of the hill states had a definite impact on these pre-Kangra artists, and by degrees another style was evolved out of the pre-Kangra style, which bears the generic name of Kangra *Qalam*. In truth, however, the Kangra *Qalam* consists of many variations. The reason for this nomenclature is that the most powerful of the hill rājās in the last quarter of the eighteenth century was the famous Sansār Chand of Kangra, who became the overlord of the hills and maintained a large atelier, as we know from the account of the traveller Moorcroft who visited his court in A.D. 1820, when Sansār had lost his power and was relegated to dependence on the Sikh conqueror Ranjit Singh.

The Kangra *Qalam* is characterized by the tenderness and delicacy of its female types and generally soft colouring, though this was not always the case. Each hill state had its own idiom of the Kangra *Qalam*. But it is not our concern at the moment to analyse the characteristics and varieties that prevailed. The Kangra *Qalam*, though influenced by the techniques of Mughal painting because of its emergence out of the pre-Kangra phase, developed graces of its own, and in particular the stylized female types of exquisite delicacy already mentioned. So also the palette is delicate in marked contrast to the passionate hot colouring of the Basohli school. Men and women seem to move in another world, a far-away world from reality, where love reigns supreme ever remembering the legend of the blue god. The hill rivers become the Jamunā, a hill prince is Kṛṣṇa, a hill princess is Rādhā, and the hill forests become the groves and woodlands of Vṛndāvan. But this mediaeval world of leisure and romance could not last for long. The armed might of Ranjit Singh, the great Sikh leader, fell heavily on the hill states and in course of time the art of painting languished.

Beauty she was statue cold
There was blood upon her gown.

As we survey the scene from Ajanta to the last days of Kangra painting, we see style and its development in manifold forms—at the zenith of greatness at Ajanta; the long struggle for emancipation till the birth of Mughal painting; and then the flowering of an exotic loveliness in the schools of Rajasthan and the Punjab hills. But that was the end. Thereafter one waits in vain

to see the mast burst open with a rose
and the whole deck put on its leaves again.

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